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Thousands flee Iranian shelling of Halabja

NICOSIA (AP) — Iranian artillery shelled the town of Halabja in northern Iraq Saturday, forcing thousands of Kurds to flee as Tehran stepped up support for a Kurdish guerrilla faction battling a rival movement, officials reported. Sarkis Kazaz, spokesman for the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) said his group had "decided to withdraw our forces from Halabja to spare the population" because of the bombardment. The PUK, led by veteran guerrilla commander Jalal Talabani, is trapped between Iranian Revolutionary Guards and Tehran-backed Kurdish fundamentalists attacking from the east and guerrillas of the rival Kurdistan Democratic Party in the west of the self-governing Kurdish enclave. Mr. Kazaz said most of Halabja's population has fled the shelling to seek shelter in the rugged mountains along the Iranian border. He did not have casualty figures and estimated more than 5,000 people have left their homes.

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Lebanon summons Security Council envoys

BEIRUT (AP) — Government leaders Saturday met with envoys of the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council amid concern the United States might veto any attempt to condemn Israel for kidnapping a Shiite Muslim guerrilla leader. Zafar Hassan, director-general of the foreign ministry, called in U.S. Ambassador Mark Hambley and envoys of Britain, China, France and Russia to convey Beirut's request for a Security Council debate on the May 21 abduction of Mustafa Dirani. After the meeting, Mr. Hassan said he briefed the envoys on the abduction which he said "violates international law, the sovereignty and security of Lebanon and the U.N. charter." Russian Ambassador Guennadi Iltchev told reporters after Saturday's meeting that he and the other envoys will relay Lebanon's request to their governments. Pressed to comment on the abduction, Mr. Iltchev said Moscow "does not see any justification for any kidnapping or violation of human rights by any side."

Israeli soldiers thwart infiltration attempt

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Three Palestinians Saturday tried to sneak into a Jewish settlement in the Gaza Strip, but were spotted by Israeli troops who shot and wounded one of the infiltrators, the Israeli army said. A second Palestinian was captured and the third escaped into the Palestinian autonomy area, said a military official, speaking on condition of anonymity. The army said it filed a complaint with Palestinian police commanders in Gaza.

Greece rejects Turkish claims

ATHENS (R) — Greece Saturday angrily rejected Turkish claims that it trained Kurdish separatists, saying it condemned violence and terrorism. Greek government spokesman Evangelos Venizelos denied Turkish foreign ministry claims that captured Kurdish separatists had confessed to being trained in Greece for sabotage missions in Turkey. "Greece has repeatedly declared that it totally condemns all acts of violence and terrorism," he said. "All of Greece is completely transparent and accessible to all, a fact that does not apply to all Turkish territories. Therefore we are not prepared to put up with these games."

U.N. team heads for Baghdad

MANAMA (R) — A 10-member U.N. team headed for Iraq Saturday to assess its biological arms capability and to prepare a technical baseline for monitoring Baghdad's deadly weapons. Team leader Dave Franz said his assessment would be used by the United Nations Special Commission on Iraq to establish the guidelines for the ongoing long-term monitoring process.

Iraq says U.S. expulsion of diplomat 'unjustified'

NICOSIA (AP) — Iraq said Saturday that the U.S. expulsion of the head of its diplomatic mission in Washington was unjustified and that it will replace the expelled official. The official Iraqi news agency, monitored in Nicosia, quoted an unidentified foreign ministry source as saying Baghdad does not accept the expulsion of Adnan Malik announced by Washington Thursday. "The diplomat did not act in any way that violates his diplomatic task, which is restricted to the minimal status of protecting Iraqi interests," he stressed.

PLO hands out self-rule portfolios, approves national authority plan

Ashrawi turns down information ministry

TUNIS (Agencies) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat has awarded two of the key economic portfolios in his Palestinian self-rule government to the Gaza Strip and Jericho to men who negotiated peace with Israel. The PLO Executive Committee also approved on Saturday the self-government programme that reaffirms commitment to peace, committee member Samir Ghosheh said. Although PLO officials deny it, the renewed commitment to meet Israeli concerns following remarks by Mr. Arafat interpreted as suggesting the peace deal signed on May 4 was temporary.

Abu Ala, a key player in negotiations that led to the self-rule deal with Israel, takes responsibility for economy and trade, and Nabil Shaath, who negotiated details of the accord, is in charge of planning and economic cooperation. PLO officials said the two were among the 15 people named as ministers in the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), which is shaping up as a coalition of Mr. Arafat's supporters in exile and Palestinians from the occupied territories.

Hanan Ashrawi, the former Palestinian spokeswoman whose television appearances worldwide during peace talks helped forge the image of Palestinians as credible negotiators, turned down the information portfolio.

Mr. Ashrawi, a 48-year-old teacher of English literature, said she would devote her time to a watchdog body monitoring human rights in the self-rule areas.

The appointments left seven seats to be filled in the PNA. Under the accord granting Palestinians limited autonomy, Israel kept responsibility for defence and foreign policy.

Mr. Ghosheh, who is responsible for labour, said that apart from Dr. Shaath and Mr. Abu Ala, whose real name is Ahmad Qureia, other "ministers" included PLO Executive Committee member Mohamad Zuhdi Nashashibi at finance.

Mr. Ghosheh said consultations were continuing on portfolios still to be handed out, including the post of interior minister, which is likely to be kept by Mr. Arafat.

The authority is due to be sworn in Jericho following a visit there by Mr. Arafat next month. Mr. Abu Ala, 53 and a Palestinian exile, was a leading player in the secret 1993 negotiations in Norway that led to the deal signed in Washington in September.

He is general manager of the Palestine Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction (PECDAR), which is to channel foreign aid amounting so far to \$2.4 billion.

Dr. Shaath, 55, heads the political commission of the Palestinian National Council, or parliament-in-exile. He led

the Palestinian team at Cairo negotiations on details of self-rule.

Mr. Nashashibi, a banker, is from one of the most prominent families of Jerusalem.

Social affairs goes to Um Jihad (Intisar Al Wazir), 52, widow of Abu Jihad (Hali Al Wazir), the PLO number two assassinated in Tunis in 1988 by Israeli commandos.

Other members of the self-rule government are: Education — Yasser Amr, a member of the PLO executive committee and head of its Education Department.

Culture and arts — Yasser Abed Rabbo, 49. A pragmatist, Mr. Abed Rabbo was one of the closest aides to Mr. Arafat in negotiations with Israel.

Justice — Freih Abu Muddein, 50, head of the Gaza Bar Association.

Housing — Zakaria Al Agha, 52, head of the Gaza Strip Medical Association.

Local government — Saeb Erekat, 39, an activist in the occupied territories, lecturer at the West Bank's An Najah University and an editorial writer for Palestinian papers.

Tourism and monuments — Elias Freij, Bethlehem mayor since 1972.

Health — Riyadh Zaanoun, chairman of the health high council in the Gaza Strip.

Youth and sports — Azmi Al Shuabi, president of the Palestinian Democratic Union.

Communications and posts — Abdul Hafidh Al Ashhab, a

leader from Hebron in the West Bank.

Transport — Abdul Aziz Haj Ahmad, 51, a former deportee, head of the Dentists' Association in the West Bank town of Ramallah.

Faisal Hussein, a senior Fateh leader in the West Bank and de facto Arab leader in Jerusalem, was made minister without portfolio with special responsibility for determining the status of Jerusalem, which the Palestinians claim as their capital.

Other meetings of the authority members were scheduled over the next days to fill the vacant seats, complete the distribution of powers and fashion out the authority's political programme and priorities, said Mr. Ghosheh.

He reported that the information portfolio was left vacant while efforts were under way to persuade Ms. Ashrawi to take it.

"It's more important to me to have a civilised society with functioning democratic institutions than to have a government post," Dr. Ashrawi told the AP Saturday.

She had demanded Mr. Arafat provide guarantees that the national authority will not be run in the same way he has controlled the PLO. So far as is known, Mr. Arafat has not made such a commitment.

Mr. Arafat had launched a last-ditch effort to bring his rivals into the Palestinian

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Ekeus meets Rashid in Amman

U.N.-Iraq talks on sanctions are at an 'important stage'

AMMAN (AP) — The head of the U.N. commission monitoring Iraq's military facilities met with a delegation from Baghdad Saturday, but both sides declined to comment about whether the crippling U.N. sanctions will be lifted soon.

Baghdad has been pressing for lifting the trade embargo, imposed by the Security Council after Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990.

It argues that it has cooperated with the United Nations to meet Gulf war cease-fire terms and should be rewarded with an easing of the sanctions.

But the Security Council voted May 18 to keep the sanctions in place for another two months.

Rolf Ekeus, head of the United Nations Special Commission on Iraqi Weapons, said after the meeting in Amman that "we're covering the implementation of the Security Council resolutions and we are at an important stage."

"I don't want to give any details of the talks," he told the Associated Press. The head of the Iraqi delegation, Gen. Amir Rashid, said he had "constructive talks with the U.N. during the meeting," but similarly declined further comment.

Mr. Ekeus is scheduled to make his next regular briefing to the Security Council on progress in monitoring Iraqi weapons May 31.



Amir Rashid



Rolf Ekeus

Photos by Yusef Al 'Allan

The meeting was held at Iraq's request, a commission spokesman said in New York last week.

He said that the terms under which Iraq would be allowed to import "dual-use" equipment, civilian items with military applications, after the sanctions are lifted, would be discussed in Amman.

All of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear facilities and ballistic missiles, were destroyed by special U.N. teams, which are now completing arrangements for long-term monitoring of Baghdad weapons facilities.

The sanctions ban most trade with Iraq, depriving it of much-needed oil revenue. The Gulf war cease-fire says Iraq again may sell oil on Baghdad has satisfied conditions relating to eliminating and monitoring weapons of mass destruction.

But the United States and Britain want to attach other conditions, including some relating to human rights and the recognition of Kuwait's sovereignty.

Mr. Ekeus said recently that monitoring arrangements should be in place in Iraq by late summer.

He said that six months of monitoring whether Iraq was in full compliance would be needed before the embargo, imposed after Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990 and occupied it for seven months, could be lifted.

But the Security Council has not yet discussed the length of monitoring time before the sanctions are lifted.

The United States has said it wants to see a minimum monitoring period of nine to 12 months. U.S. officials have said they do not believe

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Government to pursue 'economic openness' policy

By Nermeen Murad
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The government of Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali is moving ahead with its policy of removing legal and bureaucratic obstacles that stand in the face of new investors who wish to enter the previously protected sectors of the Jordanian economy, Minister of Trade and Industry Rima Khalaf said during a business luncheon with journalists and writers Saturday.

The minister said that the government's controversial amendments to the insurance law was the first step in that direction, and that this particular sector was chosen because it was the only one that was "legally protected" against the entry of new companies and investors.

"The policy of this govern-

ment is openness. On the industrial level competition is the basis of our economy," Ms. Khalaf said, adding that Jordan should reach a point where "the market decides what stays and what goes."

"The banking sector, for example, was restricted because of Central Bank regulations and not because of trade and industry laws," Ms. Khalaf pointed out in response to a specific question on that sector.

Ms. Khalaf dismissed charges that amendments she introduced to the insurance companies law were triggered by personal consideration or were taken without full backing of the cabinet.

She explained in detail the process leading to the proposal of introducing amendments to

the insurance companies law, which, she said, was "immature compared to the level of growth in the country."

"When we compared our law with that of other countries whose growth rate was compatible with that of Jordan, we found that the insurance services sector was very small in comparison to the gross domestic product or the per capita income," Ms. Khalaf said.

"We wanted to update all relevant regulations so that demand for an increase in insurance premiums would be parallel to an upgrade in the services provided by the insurance companies," the minister added.

She explained the developments that led to the clash between the insurance firms

and the ministry when eight insurance companies stopped issuing compulsory insurance against car accidents claiming that they were suffering 150 per cent losses.

"We had studied their claims and agreed with them that two neutral bodies would study their claim and come up with the accurate estimate of their losses, a proposal that they originally agreed to," Ms. Khalaf said.

"We discussed the issue in the cabinet (and) the government felt that it had three options: Accept the insurance companies' estimate for a 150 per cent increase, allow the companies, which pulled out to stay out, or allow the expansion of the insurance sector to

(Continued on page 5)



Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali (left) Saturday discusses the peace process with Russian presidential envoy Victor Posuvalnik (second from left) in the presence of Russian Ambassador Alexander Saltanov (Petra photo).

Kingdom to hold economic talks with Israel, PLO

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel will "soon" hold economic talks to discuss economic ties among the three sides, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali said Saturday after meeting with Russian presidential envoy Victor Posuvalnik.

The prime minister did not indicate when and where the talks would be held or whether they would materialise after the PLO signs an economic agreement it had reached with the Kingdom in Amman earlier this month.

The signing of the agreement was postponed due to what government and Palestinian sources described as PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's engagement in appointing members of the Palestine self-rule authority. But sources later said the two sides had differed over methods of licensing new Jordanian banks in the West Bank and the manner in which they would settle payments for exchanged goods.

The agreement defines a mechanism for putting into effect an economic accord that Jordan and the PLO finalised on Jan. 7.

Palestinian negotiator Ahmad Qureia said after the

signing of the agreement was postponed that he would return to Amman to resume the talks after discussing the agreement with the Palestinian leadership in Tunis.

Israel and the PLO had already signed an economic agreement, which will govern economic dealings between the self-rule authority in Gaza and Jericho and Israel. Jordanian experts were split on the impact of the accord on Jordan with some economists saying it was harmful to the Kingdom's economic interests and others insisting it poses no such threat.

Meanwhile, Mr. Posuvalnik who conveyed a letter from Russian President Boris Yeltsin to His Majesty King Hussein, stressed the importance of Jordan's role in the bilateral and trilateral Arab-Israeli peace talks.

Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported that the Russian envoy and Dr. Majali discussed the latest developments in the peace process and bilateral relations, which Mr. Posuvalnik said would be developed.

The Russian envoy, who was also scheduled to visit Jericho and Israel, called for a complete Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Golan Heights in exchange for full peace with Syria.

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Sanaa puts out feeler for talks as tense lull takes hold on fronts

SANAA (Agencies) — Northern leaders are putting out feelers for negotiations to end the three-week-long civil war with the south after their hoped-for lightning thrust on the southern port of Aden got bogged down, officials said Saturday.

But several Western and other sources said that there is little indication of an imminent cease-fire and forecast a protracted war which could kill Yemen's 1990 north-south merger for good.

"The dream of a swift victory is over. This could take days or weeks," said a Western diplomat.

Northern troops were still pinned down around the strategic air base of Al Anad in the mountains north of Aden, with southern air strikes and artillery bombardments blocking their efforts to push toward the southern port.

AP reporter Patrick Makin, who visited Al Anad Friday, found the sprawling complex still held by northern troops, but under constant attack.

Northern soldiers, who apparently have not been able to move forward since they seized the complex May 17, responded with barrages from multiple rocket launchers and tanks.

Anti-aircraft fire streaked the skies, but missed southern MIGs on high-altitude bombing runs.

Western and diplomatic sources said southern gunboats, artillery and warplanes have blocked the northern advance on several fronts.

Planning Minister Abdul Karim El Iryani, a close confidant of President Ali Abdullah Saleh, said Saturday that contacts are under way with "moderate" members of the Yemen Socialist Party (YSP) of separatist southern leader Ali Salem Al Beidh.

"We're not closing any channels. We are leaving all options open," he told the Associated Press, refusing to elaborate.

There have been several proposals and counterproposals for a cease-fire in recent days. But the north has rejected southern demands that the armies return to pre-unification positions.

Mr. Iryani said his main contact is Salim Saleh Mohamed, assistant secretary general of the socialist party and known as a shrewd and independent political operator.

Although Mr. Mohamed, who is currently in Europe, holds a seat on the Presidential

Council of the southern state that Mr. Beidh declared independent May 20, the north has not included him on a list of 15 Socialists sought for trial.

Despite the north's newfound readiness to negotiate, the official media in Sanaa has reported a new offensive into the oil-producing Hadramaut governorate in the east.

But a push through 300 kilometres of barren mountains and desert wadis is seen by diplomats as "a highly risky operation," straining the northern army's supply lines and leaving it exposed to raids by the south's air force, which has supremacy in the skies.

The north's air force suffered sizeable losses in the early phase of the war and has done little since.

Diplomatic sources noted that the last major northern advance was last weekend with the capture of Ataq, capital of the oil-producing Shabwah province and site of a key southern air base.

Although the northern columns have been blocked, the south has been unable to push them back to pre-war positions.

The sources suggested that the increasing talk about negotiations among northern lead-

ers indicated a growing recognition of the strong southern defensive positions and realisation that the conflict cannot be solved militarily.

But some diplomats said it is questionable whether the south is in a compromising mood right now.

A number of influential Arab states — Saudi Arabia, Egypt and some of the Gulf states which still disdain the Sanaa government for its pro-Iraqi stance in the 1990-91 Gulf crisis — are tending toward diplomatic recognition of the south. They are waiting to see if it is viable as a state.

Diplomats believe that if the south can hold out for "just a few weeks" — and there is a growing belief it can — the Gulf Arab states will recognise it "sooner or later."

Every week that the south resists "is a strike against Saleh," one source commented.

The war began May 4, almost four years after the nationalist dreams of nearly all Yemenis came true with the unification of the conservative north and socialist south.

But political, cultural and ideological differences per-

Qaboos meets Al Attas

MUSCAT (R) — Oman's Sultan Qaboos Bin Said met an envoy of southern Yemeni leader Ali Salem Al Beidh Saturday and urged an end to Yemen's civil war.

The official Omani news agency referred to the envoy as "engineer Haidar Abu Bakr Al Attas" and described him as "one of Yemen's distinguished leaders." It referred to Mr. Beidh as leader of the Yemen Socialist Party (YSP).

The agency said Sultan Qaboos urged "an end to the fighting and bloodshed between brothers in Yemen" and called on both sides "to go back to dialogue instead of fighting."

In Sanaa, Yemeni Justice Minister Abdullah Ahmad Ghanem asked parliament on Saturday to lift the immunity of Mr. Attas and five other members, who are among southerners the Sanaa government wants arrested for allegedly violating the constitution, organising rebellion and other crimes.

Oman was among six Arab states that Friday called for a United Nations Security Coun-

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Southern Yemenis back breakaway state

ADEN (R) — Amid the turmoil of war, southern Yemenis are savouring the birth of their breakaway state and the end of an unhappy four-year union with northern rivals.

The south's May 21 declaration of independence has fired up its soldiers on the frontlines and leaders, academics and troops say there should be no going back to the North-South merger.

Troops at the front heard they had their own state hours after southern leader Ali Salem Beidh announced creation of the Democratic Republic of Yemen.

"I didn't know. We now have a state. Excellent, super," said Abdullah Abdul Ghaleel, 32, a civilian volunteer on the Abyan front-northeast of Aden.

"Yes, secession is much better," said Yasser Mohammed Saleh, a 17-year-old volunteer. Soldiers fighting northern troops said the declaration gave them added incentive to defend Aden.

Mr. Beidh's strongholds which Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh has vowed to bring to heel.

Some southerners saw the merger of North Yemen and South Yemen in May 1990 as an attempt by Mr. Saleh to annex the less populous and oil-rich south and say they will never again accept him as leader.

"The unity will not return. We will not accept Saleh as president again," said Captain Abdul Rahman Qassem at the battlefield. "The four years of unity are equivalent to 129 years of British occupation."

Sumner differences last year between Mr. Saleh and Mr. Beidh, who served as vice president, over power sharing in the united Yemen government erupted into civil war on May 4.

After missile attacks against Aden and Sanaa which killed or wounded dozens of civilians, both sides have come under international pressure to end the conflict peacefully.

The north, which has been reluctant to accept international mediation, has said it is negotiating with moderates in Mr. Beidh's Yemen Socialist Party (YSP) to find a political solution.

But the south says it will not lay down its arms unless the north negotiates with the breakaway state, which no country has recognised.

"Aden will not revoke the secession decision in return for a viable ceasefire accord," Abdul Rahman Al Jifri, who was named vice president of the southern, told Reuters.

Mr. Jifri, an opposition leader until last week, said any talk of a political solution which was not conducted with the Democratic Republic of Yemen was "a waste of time."

He hinted that any possible reunion with the north could happen only in stages, along confederal or federal lines, followed by implementation of a reconciliation accord signed by both sides in Amman on Feb. 20, he said.

Mr. Jifri said a "special link and relationship" should exist between the two Yemens so they could gradually reach "true unity."

Southern Yemen has a population of about 2.4 million, compared to the North's 10.6 million people.

Mr. Beidh's announcement that the south had seceded sparked off joyful celebrations in Aden. Hundreds of residents took to the streets, firing their weapons in the air, blowing car horns and chanting their support.

Many in the south say they would not accept Mr. Saleh's

leadership again, even if Aden came under political and military pressure to revoke its decision to secede.

"There can be no unity again as long as Saleh remains in power," said Abdul Moneim Abdullah, who teaches international law at Aden University.

"People are now starting to understand that we have a state again. Sanaa did not enter the unity for the sake of unity but to destroy the south, build the northern state with a larger area."

The YSP leaders are former Marxists who ruled the south with an iron hand before the merger.

But they have promised a free market in the new state, freedom of speech and press, respect for human rights, and multi-party elections next May.

Mr. Jifri, once a sharp critic of Mr. Beidh and the YSP, now says he trusts Mr. Beidh when he says all provincial, political and tribal leaders will have a greater role in the government.

"The YSP's role in the new state is shrinking from being the sole power to being a main power broker," Mr. Jifri said.

"The new state is built on a historical reconciliation between all of the sons of (south) Yemen. All the struggles of the past from the days of the British occupation to this day will be resolved. We will heal all the wounds."

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HOME NO MORE SEALED: General Haj Ismail, the Jericho police chief, breaks open the door of Hisham Ali Balu's home. The house was sealed by the Israeli army in 1988 during the Intifada after Hisham Ali Balu was sentenced to seven years in jail for throwing grenades at the Israeli police (AFP photo)

Intifada after Hisham Ali Balu was sentenced to seven years in jail for throwing grenades at the Israeli police (AFP photo)

Somali faction leaders to meet next week

MOGADISHU (R) — Somalia's top warlords, General Mohammed Farah Aided and Ali Mahdi Mohammed will meet leaders of breakaway Somaliland Republic in Kenya next week in exploratory peace talks, a U.N. spokesman said Friday.

"Aided, Mohammed and all the Somali factions, will meet in Nairobi with leaders of the SNM (Somali National Movement of Somaliland) to prepare for a reconciliation meeting Monday," U.N. spokesman George Bennet told a news briefing.

The Somali National Movement declared a breakaway republic in Somaliland with a capital in the northern town of Hargeisa soon after the toppling of dictator Mohammed Siad Barre in 1991.

In clan-based bloodletting that followed Mr. Barre's overthrow, rival factions backing either Gen. Aided or Mr. Ali Mahdi fought battles that killed about 30,000 people and induced a famine that took 10 times as many lives.

The two men held a rare meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, in March when they agreed to

talks inside Somalia in April to prepare for a national reconciliation conference to name a government.

The April meeting, which never materialised, would also have pursued negotiations with the leaders of the breakaway republic.

Mr. Bennet said that UNOSOM (United Nations Operation in Somalia) officials held separate meetings with Gen. Aided, Mr. Ali Mahdi and leaders from the "northern sector" who then agreed to preparatory talks that would open Monday.

Turkey asks Greece to explain rebel Kurdish links

ANKARA (R) — Captured Kurdish separatists have confessed they trained in neighbouring Greece for sabotage missions in Turkey, the Turkish Foreign Ministry said Friday.

"The terrorists admitted they came from Frankfurt to Athens and were given terrorist training in a camp in Greece," ministry spokesman Ferhat Ataman said.

He said the Greek ambassador to Ankara was summoned to the Foreign Ministry on May 18 and confronted with in-

formation from the Kurds' confessions.

"We have stated the gravity of the fact that the PKK (the Kurdistan Workers Party) is trained on Greek soil and have asked for an explanation," he said. Greece has not replied.

Turkey said the guerrillas were caught by Istanbul police more than a month ago after slipping across the Meric River at the Turkish-Greek border.

He said statements by about 20 members of the PKK were videotaped by police. "They have confessed they

would have sabotaged tourist, economic and military targets," Mr. Ataman said.

Police in the west coast city of Izmir also said Thursday they had captured 16 men and a woman who trained at a PKK camp in Greece for attacks on tourists.

Police said the militants had bought an expensive speedboat to travel between the Greek islands and Ayvalik on the Turkey's Aegean coast.

"Greece is long overdue to remember and implement its international obligations

against terrorism and end its hostile policies towards Turkey," Mr. Ataman added.

"Those who sow the wind will reap the whirlwind," he said. The ministry informed the U.S., French, British and German ambassadors of its complaints. All four are, like both Greece and Turkey, members of the NATO Western alliance.

Nearly 12,000 people have died since 1984 in the PKK's guerrilla war for a separate Kurdish state in the southeast Turkey.

U.S. official stresses distinction between Islam and radicalism

WASHINGTON (USIA) — The United States respects Islam as one of the world's great religions, but rejects the goals and activities of violent extremists who claim to embody a return to Muslim values, Robert Pelletreau, the assistant secretary of state for Near East affairs, said.

"As has been said before, the United States does not view Islam as the next 'ism' confronting the West or threatening world peace," he said.

"We do, however, object strongly when we are labelled a 'great Satan,' or when our culture and values are derided, or our citizens taken hostage, or violence and terrorism practiced either randomly or to advance political ambition."

Ambassador Pelletreau was addressing a symposium on "Resurgent Islam in the Middle East" sponsored by the Middle East Policy Council.

John Esposito, director of the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University, and Daniel Pipes, editor of Middle East Quarterly, also participated in the panel discussion.

They spoke to a sizable gathering of journalists, academics and current and former officials. Middle East

Council President George McGovern noted in his opening remarks that at least two foreign ambassadors — from Qatar and Tunisia — were present.

"The viable, long-term means to defeat extremism is to address the condition on which it thrives," Mr. Pelletreau told the gathering.

The United States therefore supports economic and social development in the Middle East, as well as the creation of stable democratic institutions, he said.

"We are not trying to impose Western models of government in the Middle East, but we do regard broad political participation as an important and necessary contributor to long-term stability."

Ambassador Pelletreau also stressed the importance of the Arab-Israeli peace process. Peace between Israel and the Arabs, he said, "is important for international stability, and equally important to improving the quality of lives of those in the region."

All three panelists expressed concern that radical Islamic organisations could ruin experiments in Middle Eastern democracy. "We are suspicious," Mr. Pelletreau said of those who would use the democratic process to come to

power, only to destroy that process in order to retain power and political dominance."

John Esposito suggested that political participation is the key to producing responsible, democratic leaders. Pakistan and Malaysia, he noted, are two Muslim countries that have long permitted Islamic political groups to function — and have successfully integrated them into their systems.

In contrast, he said, governments that brand all opposition groups as extremist and therefore illegal actually push moderates into taking radical stances.

"Repression produces radicalism," Mr. Esposito said.

Mr. Esposito agreed that some Islamic opposition groups in the Middle East are anti-democratic, but stressed: "We also need to question whether current governments are democratic."

In contrast, Daniel Pipes argued that the Arab Middle East is not ready for real democracy, and that the United States should first concentrate on helping develop a civil society there. "We should not promote elections as an end in themselves," he said. "First peace, then civil society and then elections."

Mr. Pipes pointed to Algeria — where the military took control after it became clear that the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was going to win the parliamentary vote — as a country in which "elections came too soon". While admitting that the Algerian government is anti-democratic, he argued for U.S. support, since it offered a safer alternative, in his opinion, to the FIS.

Commenting on Algeria in his opening remarks, Mr. Pelletreau noted that the United States supports dialogue between the Algerian government and the FIS. "The United States has long believed — and has repeatedly stressed to Algerian leaders at the highest levels — that there is an urgent need for real political dialogue. The regime must find a means of bringing disaffected elements of the populace into a process to chart a new, democratic course for Algeria," he said.

U.S. officials are concerned over the "steadily deteriorating situation" in Algeria, Mr. Pelletreau said.

In a discussion of the presentations, Michael Dunn, an adjunct scholar at the Middle East Policy Council, argued that the United States can have

only a "peripheral" effect on the development of Middle Eastern governments. He identified Jordan as the one "relative success" in democratisation and concluded soberly, "Things are going to happen as they happen."

Mr. Pipes agreed that the United States can play only a "small" role in the struggle between moderates and extremists in the Middle East. "The great battle is not between Muslims and the West; it is between Muslims and other Muslims," he said.

At the same time, he urged clearer U.S. support for "moderates" in the Middle East, and more consistent opposition to "fundamentalists." He argued that fundamentalism "always has a political agenda," and that "there is an inherent aggressiveness to it." The United States should avoid dealing with such groups, except when absolutely necessary, Mr. Pipes said.

In contrast, Mr. Pelletreau and Mr. Esposito said they had no objection to governments with Islamic orientations and both expressed discomfort with the term "fundamentalist."

"Islam as such is not a factor in our foreign policy toward any state or group," Mr. Pelletreau said. "The United

States has close relationships with states in the Near East and Asia that seek to govern in accordance with the traditions of Islam."

Mr. Pelletreau noted that the word "fundamentalist" is imprecise and often misused, and can refer "to any number of Middle East phenomena."

Responding to Mr. Pipes, Mr. Esposito warned against falling into the trap of "secular fundamentalism," which assumes that Western-style government is the only acceptable arrangement.

During the question-and-answer period, Mr. Pelletreau was asked about the status of a visa application submitted by Rashid Ghannouchi of Tunisia's outlawed Al Nahda Party.

Mr. Ghannouchi, an Islamist leader, hopes to travel to the United States later this summer to deliver at least one public speech. Mr. Pelletreau confirmed that the application is "under consideration."

He explained that U.S. policy denies visas to persons linked to terrorist activity, and added that American officials are "uncomfortable" with the idea of providing a domestic forum to persons who advocate the overthrow of friendly governments.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Lebanon executes cop killer

SHTOURA, Lebanon (R) — A drug dealer who murdered three policemen was executed by firing squad in this eastern Lebanese Saturday. Shaker Omran Al Breidi, who shot the policemen as they tried to arrest him in March, was the fourth convicted killer to be executed since parliament earlier this year made the death penalty obligatory in murder cases. Mr. Breidi, who was tried by military court for killing security personnel, was the second person executed by firing squad in Lebanon since 1949. Death penalties handed down by civil courts are carried out by hanging.

Thai court frees Saudi murder suspect

BANGKOK (AFP) — Thailand's Supreme Court has acquitted a local man accused of the 1989 murder of a Saudi diplomat, saying witnesses could not remember enough detail of the killer's face, reports said Saturday. Judge Jaran Hatthakam Friday freed Adnan Songkrawa, 26, who had denied shooting Saleh Abdullah Al Malki, 35, a third secretary at the Saudi embassy, the news reports said. Mr. Malki was shot several times with a 6.35 mm pistol in front of his apartment in central Bangkok. The assassin fled. Three witnesses identified Mr. Adnan as the killer, but Mr. Jaran noted they had said they could not remember much detail about the assassin because they were in shock. Police believe Mr. Malki was ordered killed by owners of Thai job placement agencies because he uncovered forged documents prepared by the agencies and refused visas to Thai workers. Three other Saudi embassy employees and a Saudi businessman were killed in 1989 and 1990. The five deaths and the theft of \$20 million in gems from a Saudi prince by a Thai servant led Riyadh in 1990 to downgrade its embassy and stop issuing Thai visas. Thailand last year declared that international terrorists had killed the four embassy employees. A police lieutenant colonel is on trial for the kidnapping and death of the businessman. Eight Thais, all but one a policeman, are on trial in the gens case, in which some of the jewelry was never returned and much of what was given back was fake. Interior Ministry officials are considering indicting eight more officers in the case, including former police chief Sawasdi Amornvivat and Police General Sanong Wattanawangkul.

S. Lebanon militiamen capture guerrilla

NABATIYEH, Lebanon (R) — Israeli-backed militiamen captured a militant Muslim guerrilla outside Israel's occupation zone in South Lebanon Friday, security sources said. South Lebanon Army (SLA) militiamen seized the guerrilla, identified as belonging to the pro-Iranian Hizbollah group, on Nabi Taher Hill just outside the zone, they added. He was armed with an AK-47 assault rifle. Hours later Hizbollah guerrillas fired mortar bombs at posts manned by Israeli and SLA men on the edge of the zone, the sources said. No one was hurt. Israeli and SLA gunners responded with artillery against guerrilla-held hills to the north, the outskirts of the market town of Nabatiyeh and the nearby village of Kfar Tibnit. One civil defence worker was wounded by shrapnel while trying to put out fires that broke out in wheat fields near Nabatiyeh as a result of the shelling. Hizbollah (party of God) guerrillas launch attacks almost daily on the Israeli-held zone in their bid to liberate South Lebanon.

Turkey: U.S. aid restriction unfair

ANKARA (R) — Turkey has rejected as unfair and unjustified a U.S. congressional decision to restrict military aid to Turkey pending a report on its human rights practices. "The House of Representatives has not served Turkish-U.S. interests by this unfair decision which has no factual basis," Foreign Ministry spokesman Ferhat Ataman said. "Turkey, fighting terrorism for years, does not find it right that conditions should be imposed on aid for false reasons and justifications." The U.S. House of Representatives, which approved Wednesday a \$13.5 billion foreign aid bill for fiscal 1995, withheld a quarter of the \$364 million earmarked for Turkey in foreign military sales, pending developments on human rights and on Cyprus. Ankara rejects Western criticism that it is violating the rights of Kurds in the southeast, where security forces have been fighting guerrillas of the separatist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) since 1984. Nearly 12,000 people have died since then. "There is no Kurdish problem in Turkey but one of terrorism. Our Western friends have trouble distinguishing between the two," President Suleyman Demirel said.

Britain expels Iranian official

LONDON (R) — Britain has ordered the expulsion of an Iranian diplomat but is keeping the move secret to avoid any retaliation by Tehran, the Guardian newspaper reported. A spokesman for the British Foreign Office said he could not comment on what he called "speculation". The Guardian said Iranian Charge d'Affaires Gholamreza Ansari was summoned to the Foreign Office to be told of the decision to expel the embassy official, who was not named by the newspaper. Last month Britain expressed its annoyance at covert contacts between Iran and IRA guerrilla organisation, which is trying to force Britain to leave Northern Ireland. Foreign Office Minister Douglas Hogg summoned Mr. Ansari to tell him of Britain's displeasure and ask him to stop the contacts. In reply Iran called in Britain's top diplomat in Tehran to dismiss Britain's accusations. At the time British officials said they would maintain their vigilance said "judge the Iranian government by its actions and not its words." The diplomatic spat further clouded relations between the two countries, which hit their low over the death sentence for blasphemy imposed by former Iranian leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini on Salman Rushdie for his novel The Satanic Verses. Iran broke off relations with Britain in 1989 over the "fatwa" on the Indian-born British author. Britain reopened its mission in Tehran soon after resuming diplomatic relations at the charge d'affaire level in September 1990.

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PROGRAMME TWO
18:00 News in French
18:15 News in Arabic
18:30 News in Hebrew
18:45 News in Arabic
19:00 You Bet Your Life
20:00 Stolen Lives
21:00 News in English
22:00 The House of Eliot
23:10 The Upper Hand

PRAYER TIMES

03:55 Fajr
05:27 Sunrise (Summer) Dhul
12:33 Dhul
16:13 Asr
19:38 Maghreb
21:11 Isha

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Assemblies of God Church, Tel.
632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590.
Church of the Annunciation Tel.
637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Nativity Church Tel. 623666
Church of the Annunciation Tel.
623541.

Anglican Church Tel. 630851. Tel. 628543.

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.
St. Epiphanius Church Tel. 771751.
Armenian International Church Tel. 625226.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328.
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 664195.
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675991.
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Temperatures will drop slightly becoming around average with winds northwesterly moderate. In Agaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.
Min./Max. temp.
Amman 18 / 30
Agaba 24 / 38
Deserts 16 / 35
Jordan Valley 21 / 36
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 33, Agaba 39 Humidity readings: Amman 18 per cent, Agaba 15 per cent.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDER

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS NIGHT DUTY AMMAN: Dr. Ramad Mawri 794788 Dr. Khalil Jhal 740741 Dr. Mukhlis Mazraha 620425 Dr. Nasser Ibrahim 871039 Firas pharmacy 661912 Fardous pharmacy 78336 Al Asana pharmacy 637055 Nairohki pharmacy 623672 Al Salam pharmacy 636720 Yacoub pharmacy 644945 Shmeisani pharmacy 637660 Nairohki pharmacy 623672 Najib pharmacy 847632 IRBID: Dr. Fayer Al Qadi 244743 Alquds pharmacy (—) ZARQA: Dr. Youssef Abu Sa'd 989001 Khalifah pharmacy 985417		EMERGENCIES Food Control Centre 637111 Civil Defence Department 661111 Civil Defence Emergency 630341 Rescue 199 Fire Brigade 621111, 637777 Blood Bank 775121 Highway Police 843402 Traffic Police 669330 Public Security Department 63021 Hotel Complaints 650801 Price Complaints 661176 Water and Sewerage 897467 Amman Municipality 771013 Complaints 767111 Telephone Information 121 Directory assistance 010230 Overseas Calls 010230 Central Amman Telephone 623101 Abadi Telephone Repairs 661101 Jordan Television 774111 Radio Jordan 660101 Water Authority 815615 Jordan Electricity Authority 815615 Electric Power 626381 Company 06-53281 RJ Flight Information 06-53281		HOSPITALS Queen Alia Intl. Airport 06-53281 AMMAN: Hussein Medical Centre 813813/332 Akilich Maternity, J. Amn. 642416/2 Jabal Amman Maternity 642462 Mahas, J. Amman 636140 Palestine, Shmeisani 664171/4 Shmeisani Hospital 669131 University Hospital 845045 Al-Musaher Hospital 667227/9 The Islamic, Abdali 666127/37 Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6 Italian, Al-Muhajirin 771013 Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775111/26 Army, Marka 891611/15 Ougan Alia Hospital 662240/50 Amal Hospital 674155 ZARQA: Zargu Govi, Hospital 019843323 Zargu National Hospital 01984554 Ibn Sina Hospital 019846732 Ibn Al-Hana Modern Hospital 019846994 IRBID: Princess Isma Hospital 02127555 Greek Catholic Hospital 02127275 Ibn Al-Nafies Hospital 02127400 AQABA: Princess Haya Hospital 031314111		FOR THE TRAVELLER QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ARRIVALS Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1) 06:15 Bangkok (RJ) 07:30 Jeddah (add) (RJ) 08:00 Agaba (RJ) 09:00 Jeddah (add) (RJ) 09:00 Damascus (RJ) 10:00 Jeddah (RJ) 10:00 Larnaca (RJ) 10:55 Doha, Abu Dhabi (RJ) 11:00 Beirut (RJ) 11:20 Doha, Bahrain (RJ) 15:55 New York, Amsterdam (RJ) 17:55 Cairo (RJ) 18:25 Paris, Brussels (RJ) 18:55 London (RJ) 19:00 Madrid, Geneva (RJ) 19:30 Athens (RJ) 20:00 Frankfurt (RJ) 20:50 Vienna (RJ) 21:00 Rome (RJ) 21:15 Paris, Brussels (RJ) 06:10 Agaba (RJ) 02:00 Jeddah (RJ)		Other Flights (Terminal 2) 13:25 Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF) 14:30 Moscow (SU) 19:05 Larnaca (RJ) 19:05 Cairo (MS) 21:15 Beirut (MS) 23:20 Istanbul (TA) 01:25 Amsterdam (KL) DEPARTURES Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1) 06:15 Agaba (RJ) 07:30 Beirut (RJ) 08:30 Brussels (RJ) 10:00 Amsterdam, Frankfurt (RJ) 11:00 Vienna (RJ) 12:00 Rome (RJ) 12:00 Cairo (MS) 13:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ) 13:00 Athens (RJ) 13:45 Cairo (RJ) 14:00 Riyadh (RJ) 21:00 Jeddah (RJ) 21:45 Agaba (RJ) 21:45 Damascus (RJ) 22:00 New Delhi (RJ) 22:30 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ) 22:45 Singapore, Jakarta (RJ) 23:30 Bangkok (RJ) 06:00 Riyadh (RJ) Other Flights (Terminal 2) 07:30 Rome (AZ) 14:30 Doha, Bahrain (GF) 16:05 Moscow (SU) 19:05 Larnaca (CY)		RAILWAY TRAIN Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m. every Monday Arr. Damascus 5:30 p.m. every Monday Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday MARKET PRICES Upper/lower price in fcs per kg. Apple 550 / 650 Banana 600 / 650 Banana (Mukammal) 620 / 650 Cabbage 150 / 180 Carrot 380 / 280 Cauliflower 200 / 180 Cucumbers (large) 100 / 150 Cucumbers (small) 180 / 120 Eggplant 230 / 150 Garlic 400 / 400 Lemon 340 / 240 Marrow (large) 150 / 180 Marrow (small) 300 / 200 Melon 200 / 100 Pepper (hot) 240 / 140 Pepper (sweet) 340 / 240 Potato 450 / 350 Peaches 700 / 550 Tomato 120 / 60 String beans 500 / 400 Watermelon 250 / 180 Vine Leaves 600 / 500	
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Americans for Peace Now see economic revival with peace

AMMAN (Petra) — The head of a visiting group of members of the board of directors of Americans for Peace Now (APN), a Jewish-American non-governmental organisation, Saturday underlined the importance of establishing peace in the Middle East for the benefit of all countries in the region.

Linda Heller Kamm, who was speaking at a meeting with Mohammad Asfour, chairman of the Amman Chamber of Commerce, said that countries of the Middle East will enjoy security and stability and witness economic prosperity after peace

has been established.

Mrs. Kamm and the accompanying delegation, which leaves Sunday for the occupied Arab territories to study the situation there, reviewed political and economic issues currently facing Jordan and the region, and the role which the United States can play in support of the area's economic revival.

Mr. Asfour outlined the chamber's activities and its role in the Jordanian economy.

Emphasising the heavy burdens Jordan has shouldered as a result of instability in the region and the absence of peace, Mr. Asfour said

that the Kingdom has received many pledges for assistance during this difficult stage, but has received nothing.

The visiting delegation Thursday met with Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Talal Al Hassan and reviewed with him the Palestine issue and the refugee problem, as well as Jordan's peace efforts.

According to APN Washington Office Director Gail Pressburger the purpose of the group's visit is to understand Jordan's perceptions of the peace process and bilateral U.S.-Jordan relations.

ESCWA to discuss regional cooperation

AMMAN — Ministerial delegations from the 13-member states of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) meet at the Fort Grand Hotel today for the opening of the commission's 17th ministerial session. Held under the patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the three-day session will discuss regional cooperation and economic and social development.

Included on the session's agenda is ESCWA's budgetary and financial situation and its medium-term plan for 1992-1997, as well as the proposed amendments to ESCWA's work programme and its priorities for 1994-1995 and for 1996-1997.

Delegates will review the progress made in implementing ESCWA's work programme for 1992-1993, which includes the commission's substantive work as well as its performance in the realm of technical cooperation.

The issue of ESCWA's permanent location will also be taken up by the delegates. Proposals from Jordan, Lebanon and Qatar to host the commission on a permanent basis will be studied, as will Iraq's renewed offer to resume hosting the commission.

ESCWA has been temporarily based in Amman since the Gulf crisis in 1991. Session participants will examine the social and economic conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories, as well as the social and economic conditions of Syrian citizens under Israeli occupation in the Syrian Golan Heights.

In addition, ESCWA's regional cooperation and coordination activities in the areas of the environment and sustainable development will be assessed, and regional preparations for upcoming U.N. conferences will be reviewed.

Ministry to impose strict measures on private water tanker services

By Elia Nasrallah
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Health Ministry Saturday announced plans to impose strict measures on private water tanker businesses, including severe penalties for those which violate safety regulations.

Health Minister Abdul Rahim Malhas said that from June 4 to 30, inspection teams will conduct an intensive campaign of spot checks to ensure that such services are providing potable and safe drinking water to consumers.

According to Qais Halaweh, head of the Health Department in Amman Governorate, a similar campaign launched last April found 28 water tanker owners in viola-

tion of safety standards.

Dr. Halaweh said the department will monitor the water resources and privately-owned springs where the tankers are filled and the tankers themselves, which are required to meet certain specifications, adding that inspection teams will follow trucks to their various destinations to ensure that there are no violations of the regulations.

He told the Jordan Times that in addition, water tanker drivers are now required to produce a certificate showing that the water in their tankers came from licensed and controlled water springs.

According to Dr. Malhas, the water from the springs is tested regularly, and certain amounts of chlorine should

be present, among other conditions. "We are determined to prevent the import of water to Amman from the nearly 25 springs located outside the perimeter of the Greater Amman region unless we are 100 per cent sure that it is safe for drinking and that the same measures are being applied to all other springs and water tankers in other governorates," said Dr. Halaweh.

Both the minister and Dr. Halaweh stressed that not only violators be fined, but their licences could be revoked and the springs shut down.

According to Dr. Halaweh, another intensive campaign was expected by the end of September, but generally, spot checks will

continue, especially in view of the soaring summer temperatures and water shortages in many districts.

"For further protection we have requested that water tanker drivers obtain a certificate from the health authorities verifying that they are not carrying any infectious diseases," Dr. Malhas added.

Meanwhile, Dr. Malhas announced that he has directed various health departments to conduct a general survey of all dairy plants to ensure that they do not recycle returned yoghurt after their expiry dates. The minister said that samples of dairy products would be taken for laboratory tests on regular basis.



ARAB ENGINEERING: The Executive Bureau of the Arab Engineers Federation Saturday opens its meetings in Amman with the participation of delegates from Iraq, Sudan, Lebanon and Egypt in addition to Jordan. Participants in the two-day meetings, which are chaired by Federation Vice-President Husni Abu Ghaida, will discuss decisions taken by the bureau in

earlier meetings, following up the implementation of these decisions and the federation's future plans, in addition to other issues. Mr. Abu Ghaida told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that the bureau will also discuss issues pertaining to the establishment of an engineering information centre through a Libyan donation (Petra photo)

Bids for electric grid linkage to be floated by year end

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Walid Asfour Saturday announced that tenders for an electric linkage project between Egypt and Jordan will be announced before the end of 1994, noting that the plan constitutes the first phase of a project for linking the grids of the two countries with those of Syria, Iraq and Turkey.

Mr. Asfour who has just

returned from a meeting in Cairo, where he discussed the linkage project with the energy ministers in the other countries, said that the ministers emphasised the need for implementing the Egyptian-Jordanian part of the linkage programme as a "basic stage", to be followed by linkages with the other three countries.

Noting that the Kuwait-based Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development will finance the Jordanian-Egyptian part, including the underwater cables to be laid

between the two countries, Jordan Electricity Authority (JEA) Director General Mohammad Arafeh said that the Egyptian-Jordanian part would cost \$200 million.

Mr. Arafeh, who accompanied the delegation to the Cairo meeting, told the Jordan Times that Jordan's share of this bilateral scheme would cost \$60 million.

The Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development would also finance the linkage with the other Arab states, but the Jeddah-based Islamic De-

velopment Bank would finance the linkage with Turkey at a later stage, said Mr. Arafeh.

According to Mr. Asfour, the Jordanian-Egyptian part will be completed and operational by 1997, but according to the overall plan involving linkage between the five countries, the deadline is the year 2002, said the JEA official.

Mr. Asfour said that the ministers who met in Cairo agreed to hold their next meeting in Turkey, in April next year.

Vatican official denies persecution report

By Elia Nasrallah
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A Vatican official Saturday categorically denied an Agence France Presse (AFP) report in the Jordan Times and other dailies published Thursday that said the Vatican "has acknowledged for the first time that the Catholic Church had a role in centuries of persecution of Jews including the World War II holocaust."

In the report, AFP cited

what it called a draft document yet to be ratified by Pope John Paul II.

Monsignor Raouf Najjar, counsellor for the Vatican embassy in Amman said such a document, which alleged that the church offered no effective resistance to the Nazi persecution and extermination of Jews, does not exist.

He told the Jordan Times that the only document concerning the holocaust or anti-semitism was referred to dur-

ing a meeting of the International Liaison Committee between Catholics and Jews in Jerusalem.

This document, said Msgr. Najjar, is a mere project that was not discussed at that meeting, but rather was being prepared within the German Bishops' Conference in consultation with the Polish Episcopal Conference.

He said it was clear that it was only a question of a project in the planning stage which has not yet been

approved by any ecclesiastical authority.

"Naturally, in no way is it a question of a project being worked on at the Holy See, but rather by the Polish and German Episcopal conferences," Msgr. Najjar said.

According to the AFP report, the Vatican said "a terrible mixture of religious, social, economical, political and racial hostility created the historical basis for the European Jews being driven on their deadly way towards the Shoah (holocaust)."

Noël Favrelière's 'ephemeral circle'

By Ica Wabbah
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — "The ephemeral circle" could be the rough translation of the French name Noël Favrelière gives his novel exhibition at Darat Al Funun.

Ephemeral, he says, because "instead of talking, I draw on the walls and then I erase it," says the director of the French Cultural Centre who had not exhibited in over eight years.

And circle because, after quoting the Japanese Hokusai who had said: "A point or a line is (something living)," the artist asks: "What do you say then of a circle or a right angle?" trying to stress the living quality of the two basic geometric figures he deals with at his exhibition.

Mr. Favrelière had started his painting studies in France when the Algerian war broke. His open siding with the opinion that Algeria should be liberated brought upon him a death sentence and 10 years of exile.

The years of exile were not spent fruitless. Mr. Favrelière restarted his studies, this time of the history of art at Columbia University in New York, and then at Ljubljana University in present Slovenia.

He would hold exhibitions in the U.S. and even France, where people "would not come for my art but because of the death sentence hanging over my head."

General Charles de Gaulle ended his exile with an annul-

ment of his "crime" so the artist could resume a normal life.

What he has today at Darat Al Funun is "not an exhibition, not an installation, it is a demonstration. The exhibition aims at showing that "we can reach pure sensations without having to look at reality."

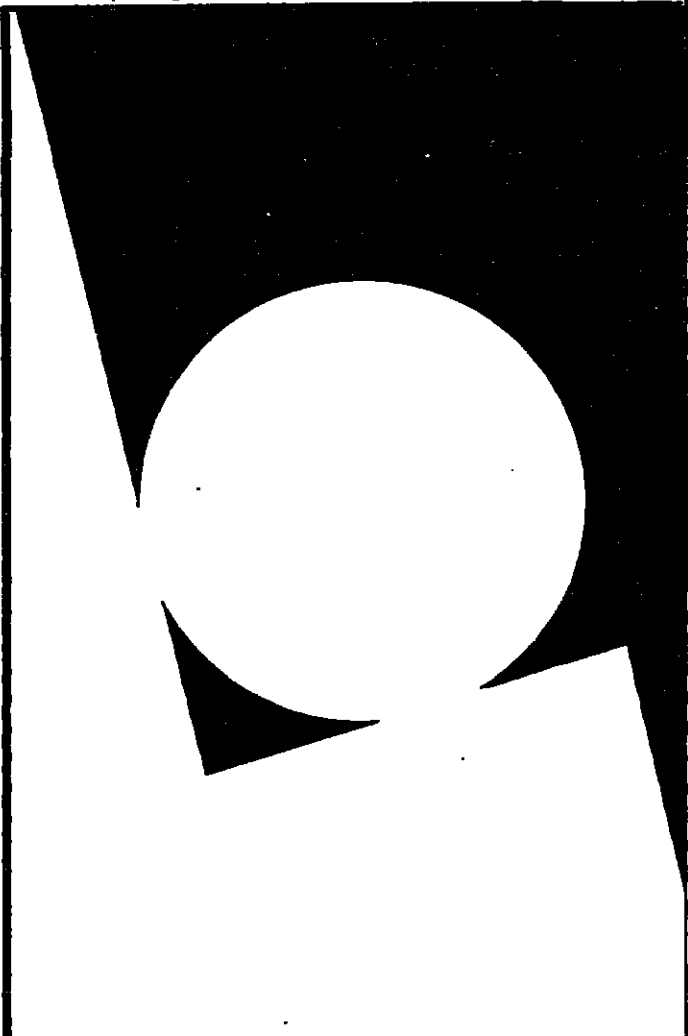
It is, the artist says, what the Russian Malevitch (the creator of suprematism) was doing 80 years ago with his painting "Black square on white background," a work done not to impress the bourgeoisie of the time, but as a logic process that started with Cezanne who "wanted to treat nature by means of the cube, the cylinder, the sphere and the cone, passing through cubism and the Italian futurism."

In the same way the neo-impressionist, pointillist painter juxtaposes blue and yellow dots in order to make the viewer see green. Mr. Favrelière does not finish his lines and curves, knowing that someone will do it.

If the first case is a matter of physics, optics to be more precise, in the second, the phenomenon is a mental one. To strengthen his point, Mr. Favrelière cites a line written by Leonardo da Vinci 500 years ago that says: "Painting is something mental."

The artist finds affinity between his work, the Islamic geometric art and Zen art, and seeing his frames drawn on the walls of the exhibition hall will prove him right.

Perhaps Mr. Favrelière's



The work of Noël Favrelière

words explain best his art philosophy and help understand his "ephemeral" work: "Art is not an answer but a question that generates other

questions... till the mind finit." The exhibition, inaugurated on May 28, will be on until June 3.

Qaboos meets

(Continued from page 1)

oil meeting on Yemen. Only Oman is a council member and its ambassador, Salim Bin Mohammed Al Khussaiby, is scheduled to take over the rotating council presidency next Wednesday.

Diplomats in Muscat noted that Sultan Qaboos did not meet northern Foreing Minister Mohammad Salem Basendwa on his May 16 visit, although he was carrying a letter from Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh to the Sultan.

Mr. Basendwa was met by Oman's minister of state for foreign affairs, Youssef Bin Alawi Bin Abdullah.

Mr. Attas is touring Arab countries and has visited Syria where he met president Hafez Al Assad, and Saudi Arabia where he held talks with King Fahd.

Mr. Al Attas later flew to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) where he was met at Abu Dhabi airport by UAE Information Minister Khalaf Al Roumi.

The official Emirates News Agency (WAM) referred to Mr. Beidh as president in reporting Mr. Attas's arrival. It reported Mr. Attas as "doctor."

WHAT'S GOING ON

DRAMA

★ Drama in Arabic entitled "An Old Comedy" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

★ Installation entitled "Ephemerals of a Circle" by artist Noël Favrelière at Darat Al Funun of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Luweibdeh at 5:00 p.m. (Tel. 643251/2).

★ Exhibition of paintings by disabled children at the Royal Cultural Centre.

★ Exhibition of paintings by 20 Jordanian and Iraqi artists (including Widad Orfali, Hussein Da'seh, Waddah Al Ward, Adnan Al Hila and Mahmoud Hussein) at Orfali Art Gallery in Umm Uthaina (Tel. 826932).

★ Exhibition by 46 artists entitled "He, Bonjour Monsieur La Fontaine" at the French Cultural Centre.

★ Exhibition of water colour paintings by artist Itab Hreih and another exhibition of ceramics by Sajida Al Mashaiki at Ain Art Gallery in Wadi Saqra (Tel. 644451, 652823).

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Diplomatic efforts bear fruit

WITH southern Yemeni forces succeeding in part to stop the drive by northern Yemeni troops towards Aden, the stage is set again for diplomatic activity to bring the two sides back to the negotiating table. The flurry of diplomatic activity, both on the regional and international levels, to halt the armed hostilities between Sanaa and Aden, appears to bear fruit with the announcement that the U.N. Security Council is about to step in and adopt a resolution calling for the cessation of the armed conflict and the resumption of peace talks.

Fortunately, the fresh attempts to settle the dispute between the north and the south have not been accompanied by the recognition of the breakaway state of southern Yemen. Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh's first priority has been the preservation of the national unity of his country and short of the dismemberment of his nation anything could be put once again on the negotiating table. Even the avowed supporters of Yemeni Vice President Ali Salem Al Beidh have refused to yield to the pressure exerted by him to accord his secessionist efforts approval and endorsement.

The southern Yemeni leader's precipitous decision to declare independence for his breakaway state suggests that his first priority was never the national interest of his country. The lack of support for that decision cannot be explained except as a major setback for his shortsighted policies. It is one thing to differ and quite another to put the overall interest of the country on the line.

With both sides not able to achieve their primary goals, the stalemate can no longer be resolved on the battlefield. The major Arab players have not burnt their bridges with either side by first staying aloof from the armed conflict and then by not granting recognition to Aden. There is room therefore for an effective Arab mediation whose target must be first the national unity of the country and second the resolution of the political division that has persisted even after the declaration of the unity between the two parts of the country four years ago.

Nothing short of a national election could permanently and effectively rectify the existing shortcomings in the political infrastructure of Yemen and the sooner that the two sides put their faith in democracy and human rights the better it would be for the entire Yemeni people. This could be easier said than done in view of the deep and strong roots of tribalism and underdevelopment that pervade all aspects of life in Yemen. Still an effort needs to be made to phase out tribalism as a political base for the country, and introducing pluralistic democracy can be the only viable route for attaining this very objective.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

UNITY OR end of unity in Yemen is a matter that is no longer of concern to the majority of Arab masses who only care about the innocent lives that are being wasted and the institutions that are being devastated, said Al Ra'i daily Saturday. For this reason, Arab masses can only hope that the leaders of Sanaa and Aden will opt for dialogue and end of bloodshed and prevent any foreign intervention that could prolong the civil war, said the daily. Reports that elements from both sides have been in constant over the prospect of opening a dialogue to end the conflict are welcome news to the Arab masses, said the paper. In addition, one can only hope that heads of Arab regimes would seek reconciliation in a collective effort to bring the fighting to a halt and prevent any internationalisation of the Yemeni question, added the daily. But what is more important for the moment is for the leaders of North and South Yemen to exert more strenuous efforts towards a final settlement and safeguarding their nation's interests and future.

A COLUMNIST in Al Dussour daily Saturday urged Arab states to extend a helping hand to the newly established autonomy rule in Gaza and Jericho. The two areas serve as a defence line for the Arab Nation in general and Jordan in particular, and any progress achieved in the two areas, which have been liberated as a first step, means a strengthening of the frontline defences protecting the Arab World from Zionist expansionist plans, said Mohammad Subeih. The writer said if the two autonomy areas enjoy prosperity, their inhabitants will not be encouraged to abandon their homeland and this can best be achieved through pumping more funds to build up the Arab territories economically, socially and politically. According to the writer, 40 per cent of the total workforce in Gaza is currently unemployed and these people ought to be helped to hold on to their national soil by their Arab brothers who can and should help preserve Arab presence in any part of the occupied territories and Palestine at large. He warned that unless the promised Palestinian and other Arab funds arrive in time, the Arab people in the autonomy rule as well as lands still under occupation are bound to witness further sufferings.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

By Dr. Fahed Fanek

Water prices must be reformed

THE HEAVILY subsidised price of irrigation water in the Jordan Valley is about to cause a major loss to Jordan. The government committed itself to raise the price per cubic metre from 6 fils to 10 fils, but it is still hesitating to make the unavoidable decision, which admittedly will be unpopular, unless the public opinion is well-informed and prepared.

The direct operational cost of delivering water to the farms was estimated at 26 fils per cubic metre, while overall cost was estimated at 48 fils. Water was sold to the farmers at the symbolic price of 3 fils, raised five years ago, i.e., before the devaluation of the dinar to 6 fils. It is time now to adjust the price upwards to at least 10 fils, which will secure the recovery of 38 per cent of the variable cost leaving a direct subsidy of 62 per cent or a total subsidy of 80 per cent. This is only a step towards more adjustments in the future until the farms cover all the actual direct cost of the water they consume.

This difficult decision is a must due to two reasons: The first is economic. Water is one of the most scarce resources in the country, its price therefore should be raised in order to curb waste, and to put the available quantity to the best usage to maximise productivity. Raising the price is justified for conservation purposes even if the cost was lower than the price.

The second and equally important reason is that the donor countries and the World Bank are extremely unhappy observing the inefficiency in managing this scarce resource despite its acute shortage. They are willing to assist Jordan to develop water and agricultural sectors provided we do our bit in assisting ourselves. Europeans extended two soft loans from the European Investment Bank (EIB) to finance irrigation and agricultural projects. The Consultative Group of Donors, in their meeting in Paris on May 17, committed \$200 million of grants and soft loans to finance structural adjustment reforms. In both cases the grants and loans are conditional and subject to gradual raising of water prices as a pre-condition for

becoming available.

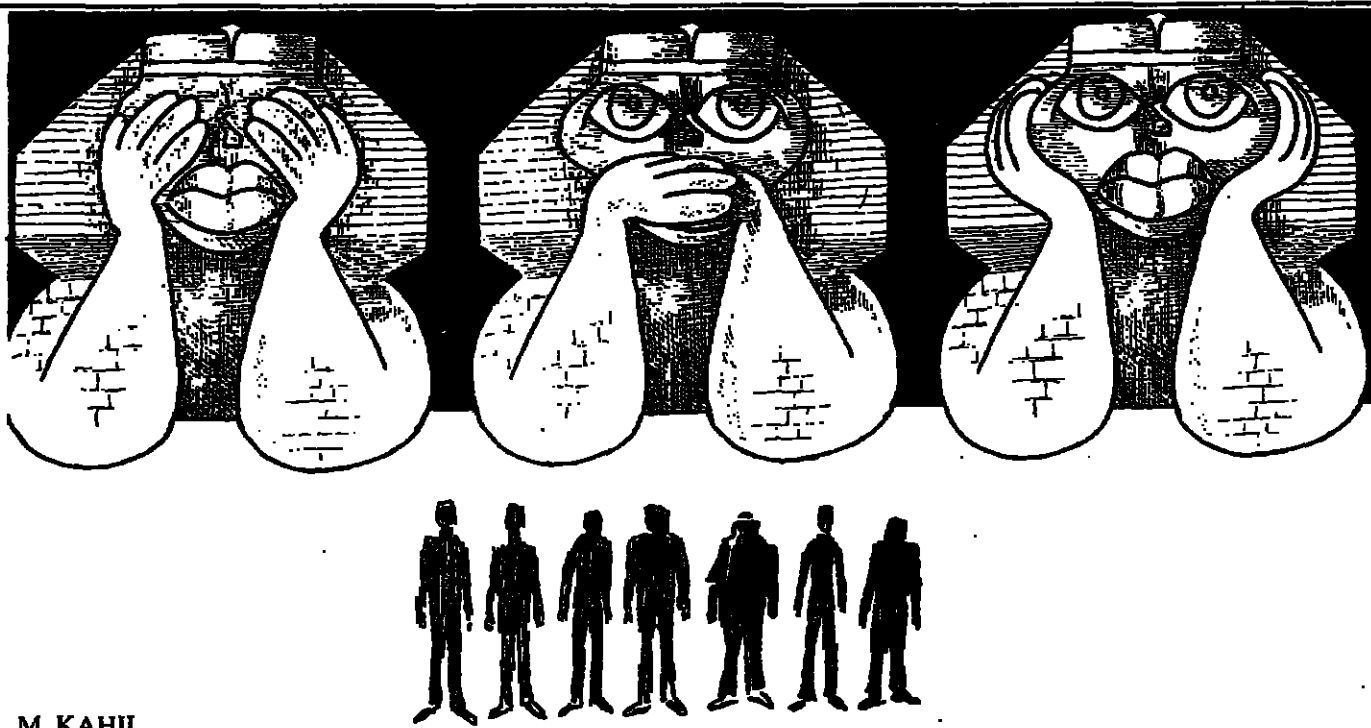
The Europeans patience ran out after prolonged failure by the government to act as agreed upon. They suspended the loans of the EIB until the price of water is raised. The donors of the Consultative Group, which allocated \$200 million payable to Jordan, during the second half of 1994 to close the financial gap, will not pay a cent if the failure of the government to make the decision continued. Since we have a responsible government in charge and not a do-nothing bunch of paralysed ministers, we expect a decision very soon.

What happens if the government decided tomorrow to raise the price of irrigation water from 6 to 10 fils per cubic metre? Will the sky fall on the ground and the farmers go bankrupt. Of course our sensational weekly newspapers would announce a 67 per cent rise in the price, which, they would claim, would kill the poor farmers.

But what are the facts?

The additional cost which will be borne by the farmers will be in the order of JD \$600,000, i.e., less than one million dollar, but the farmers will definitely gain much more when the government spends \$300 million to develop agriculture and irrigation, which is contingent upon raising the price of water. The feasibility of the decision is thus obvious and the failure to make use of \$300 million is harmful to the national economy in general and the farmers in particular.

The gross output of agriculture in Jordan is roughly estimated at JD 400 million a year, of which some JD 220 million represent value added, and JD 180 million represent inputs. The cost of raising the price of water is therefore no more than one third of one per cent of the cost of inputs, or one seventh of one per cent of the price of the final output. It is a trivial amount that is less than 4 per cent of the cost of polyculture packages bought by the farmers each year without complaining.



M. KAHIL

Israel sees good ties with S. Africa

By Susan Sappir
Reuter

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM — Israel's withdrawal from occupied lands coinciding with the end of white rule in South Africa could bode well for future relations, despite the Jewish state's links with the scrapped apartheid regime.

"There is no doubt there is a link, even a direct link, between the peace process in the Middle East and good relations with South Africa," said Yigal Antebi, head of the Israeli Foreign Ministry's Africa desk.

For decades, South African President Nelson Mandela's African National Congress (ANC) identified with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) as sharing a common struggle against oppression. Many black South Africans equated Israel with their white oppressors.

Change came with the dramatic announcement of mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO last year, followed by a series of peace agreements now being implemented. This opened the

way for a thaw in the ANC's relations with the Jewish state, ahead of the historic change of government in South Africa.

"We know the affinity between Mandela and leaders of the PLO, especially Chairman Yasser Arafat," Mr. Antebi said.

Since Israel talks to Mr. Arafat now, after refusing to do so for years, Mr. Mandela can now embrace Israel, he added.

One of the first world figures Mr. Mandela received before his swearing-in ceremony was Israeli President Ezer Weizman, in a public gesture of conciliation. Then he called in Mr. Arafat and reiterated his support of the Middle East peace process.

Although Israel was always officially opposed to apartheid, it maintained close ties to South Africa even when Pretoria was ostracised because of its policies of racial discrimination.

A sense of shared isolation drew the two nations together as Israel, too, came under attack in international forums for its treatment of Palestinians.

Non-military trade be-

tween the countries last year totalled more than \$250 million in South African exports to Israel, and \$120 million in the other direction.

Western analysts have estimated the value of the arms trade between the countries at hundreds of millions of dollars — far more than the official figure of \$300 million.

Israel followed the West in imposing economic, military and cultural sanctions on South Africa in 1987, then lifted the restrictions in 1992 as Pretoria moved to dismantle apartheid.

Meanwhile, non-governmental Israeli bodies had been laying the groundwork for future relations with a black South African government. The Histadrut Labour Federation and others offered training courses for black grassroots leadership.

Leftist Israeli parliament member Naomi Chazan, who is also a professor of African studies, says the focus of the relations will now be on South Africa's much-needed development.

"I think the foundations of the relations now will be much more on the economic

level — development, housing, education — the range of things Israel has a really good track record on. The new South Africa has unimaginable gaps to bridge on the socio-economic levels."

Selma Browde, a political activist in Johannesburg with close ties to Israel and the ANC, said in a telephone interview the training courses in Israel deeply affected the black participants far beyond their overt educational value.

"They were amazed the struggle in Israel was not over colour," she said. "They thought all Jews were white and Arabs dark. When they saw there were Jews who look like Arabs they were amazed. They were also surprised not all Jews were rich."

South Africa's 100,000 Jews are largely affluent.

Mr. Mandela has called on the Jews to stay and contribute their professional expertise to building a new South Africa. But the community has already been depleted by the migration of 18,000 to Israel over the years, and tens of thousands to other countries, according to Israeli immigration officials.

LETTERS

Social borders

To the Editor:

I AM an American student at the University of Jordan. I am writing to convey some of my impressions concerning the subject of sex in Jordan and the Middle East. I wish to relate a couple of incidents that have occurred over the past two weeks to illustrate my point.

Last weekend, two female friends and I made the trek to Hammamat Ma'in to rest from a week of study and enjoy a dip in the warm spring water. From the moment we arrived, we were tracked by packs of young men. Even when I requested that they respect the women's privacy just as they would an Arab woman's, they persisted in walking back and forth past the private place we had staked out for ourselves. I was incensed, knowing as I did that no Arab man would tolerate behaviour even a tenth so lascivious directed toward his own wife, sisters or daughters. For upwards of an hour, I begged them repeatedly to respect our desire to be left alone. A few of the older fellows finally took my words to heart and cleared out, but the rest continued to circle around. I finally had to grab one of the boys and shake him and threaten him before they all slowly made their way back up the river to where they had all before we arrived. But not before they had taken an ample opportunity to mock my foreign accent and laugh at my inability to maintain my composure under the burden of their inhospitable conduct.

Two days later, I was down on University Avenue with my girlfriend. We were on our way to the university, but had sat down a little off to the side in the most private place we could find in order to discuss a particularly sad and difficult loss we were dealing with that affected us both to the extent that we found it difficult to continue on our way until we had talked it over a little. Three students came to where we were, and in the most somber tones they could muster, asked if they might speak to me a moment in private. No matter that we were both in tears and that the least they could do if they felt compelled to interfere with an obviously private conversation was to offer to help us in whatever way they could. Instead they proceeded to inform me that it was not only wrong to hold hands in public in Jordan, but that it was also illegal and that we could be arrested for it. Eager as I was not to offend, I quickly apologised and attempted to explain that we had a particularly pressing problem that demanded our attention and that I had simply forgotten to be a little more circumspect, understanding as I did the importance of respecting the more conservative nature of Jordanian society. The self-appointed spokesman, however, merely waved his hand in front of his face and walked on.

These two events demonstrate what happens when sex is repressed in a given society to the point that it becomes simultaneously the most enticing and the most revolting act imaginable. Teenage boys and even grown men torture themselves in the attempt to rid their bodies of this natural desire, or else they become so consumed by it that they spend their every waking hour plotting ways to seduce women. Others parade around preaching against any contact between men and women, thus eliminating from the human experience the natural interaction between boys and girls by which personalities are formed and lessons are learned that will help one to have self-confidence and sufficient knowledge of the world to be successful in life.

Does it have to be this way? No! Children can be brought up to know that love and sex and friendship are three distinct concepts. They can learn that love coupled with true friendship creates some of the most fulfilling moments of a lifetime. But this won't happen as long as public interaction between males and females is deemed unacceptable.

It is not my intention to claim that my own country has a monopoly on solutions to problems. In Washington, D.C., where I live, more people (approximately twice as many) have been murdered since the beginning of the Intifada than in the occupied territories. Teenage pregnancies abound, and abortion is often viewed as the most convenient form of birth control. However, I am certain that the number of teenage pregnancies would be much higher if girls there were raised as potential victims like many girls here are. And as for drugs, the primary cause of homicides in large U.S. cities, that is a difficult problem that is only becoming worse throughout the world. As tempting as it might seem to simply execute drug dealers, it seems that the more rational response is to teach children (and adults) about the adverse effects that drugs can have on their lives and encourage them to resist the temptation to indulge. After all, a drug dealer is only as dangerous as his clientele will allow him to be. And if there is no demand for drugs, then the dealer will have no means to purchase dangerous weapons and, indeed, no reason to purchase them since competition is scant in a business that makes no money.

This seeming diversion into the topic of how best to solve the drug problem does have relevance for the purposes of my discussion. For I would similarly suggest that instead of prohibiting contact between males and females and refusing to talk openly to teenagers about the dangers of unprotected sex, it would make more sense to simply teach them the importance of placing limits on their behaviour and let them make their own decisions. In Provo, Utah, the mid-sized Western U.S. city where I grew up, the prevailing religion of the region (Mormonism) taught us that we should "learn correct principles and govern ourselves." As a result, one girl out of my graduating class of several hundred students became pregnant out of wedlock. Unfortunately, she was shunned by some and gossiped about by others, but since Western culture deals with this phenomenon so differently, there was never any danger she would lose her life. In fact, there was little chance of her being rejected by her family. She married the man who was responsible for her pregnancy and, as far as I know, they are still together today. So instead of capitalising into a catastrophe, a tragedy was transformed into a reasonably tolerable situation. And while the more ideal situation (both for the child and the parents) would have been to conceive a child within the bonds of marriage, I find it laudable that the concerned persons could find a way to make things work in the aftermath of what is a relatively rare yet sometimes unavoidable incident.

Both women and men have much to gain by relaxing the practice of segregating the sexes. Women will have the world opened to them. Of course, with this new freedom will come risks, but with adequate training, they will be much better equipped to face these risks. Men, if allowed to get to know women in dating relationships, will spend less time obsessing about sex and, doubtless, accomplish much more with their lives. This experience will better prepare both men and women to make a suitable choice for a mate when the time comes that they wish to marry. And in addition, they will be less lonely during their adolescent and young-adult years, years which should be among a person's happiest but which are too often filled with loneliness and lack of fulfillment due to the difficulties of finding the intimate friendship that all human beings long for.

David Harris,
Fax: 844181,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

إلى من يهمه الأمر

Making a difference

Assured that the guns are silent, Croatians bring back life to their villages

Following is the second and last part of a report that Jordan Times Staff Reporter Ica Wahbeh filed after visiting Jordanian peacekeepers in Croatia earlier this month. The first part appeared on Saturday.

At about 45 km northwest of Lovinac, there is a mechanised infantry platoon (around 30 soldiers) in the village of Berlet. The road leading to it, when not full of stones, is full of crater-like holes left by mines defused by the Canadian sappers. Riding on it and avoiding overturning is proof of mastery.

And here, in Berlet, I am to have the most scary adventure of my visit to Croatia: Going after mines.

Capt. Marwan Maqableh, the company commander in the village, is telling us how only 10 minutes earlier an anti-tank mine had exploded about 800 metres away, ripping through a deserted Croatian house. The bomb, he assumes, was triggered off by some grazing animal.

The width of the separation zone between Croats, west of the camp, and Serbs, east of it, is two kilometres. "Our mission is to forbid any party from entering the area, to collect information, to provide the local inhabitants with humanitarian help, to accompany the UNPROFOR caravans and to directly report to the Lovinac headquarters," Capt. Maqableh says.

And then, more confidentially: "There are some anti-personnel and anti-tank mines on the road if you want to see them."

Accompanied by head of our delegation Col. Shobaki, a photographer, the daring captain and the Jeep driver, I go mine-hunting — not the most responsible thing ever.

The Croats are very near and we have to ride the blue-flagged car for our own good. Not for long though, as the stems of two mortar missiles exploded on impact are showing on the road drowned in unchecked vegetation. The rest is done on foot. It is the longest stretch of land I have covered in my life, all the 850 metres of it. Nobody is talking any more. After reaching the two anti-tank mines the captain knew about and photographing them as well, we have to return.

The way back is not to be any easier. The car is going in reverse on the narrow street bordered by mines. Not an easy task when the saloon is done among bombs. With infinite precaution and manoeuvres the driver eventually turns the Jeep to face the road and the rest of the distance is covered with sighs of relief.

The Medak pocket, once one of the most dangerous areas in Sector South and not exactly benign now, is exuding an air of eeriness. Nothing is stirring in the balmy, sunny atmosphere. It could have been a perfect place for a picnic in times of peace.

But not now.

Death is everywhere. Houses, those still standing, are completely destroyed. Gas ranges, pots and pans, cars and roofs are left charred on the spots where they had been blown off. It is difficult to believe that the place was once inhabited and that someone would ever want to see it like that. But the destruction was willed. Carbonised trees stand witness to the wanton destruction. No trace of the previous owners should be left behind. Not even the trees planted by them.

Destruction is total; some trees have branches still hanging at odd angles, violently severed by flying missiles. The date of devastation is not far away: September 1993. And on this peaceful cemetery for men and things grow two beautifully coloured tulips; life following death or sign that man, in all his madness, cannot so easily destroy nature, that life is stronger than death, creation stronger than destruction.

We leave the place with heaving stomachs. What makes one want to destroy so badly?

More places to see, more Jordanian soldiers on duty. At a checkpoint on the road to Bihac, Capt. Fathi Jbour talks about monitoring the situation at the cross point, about the humanitarian aid (gas for school buses, Red Cross cars, ambulances) and about performing the task fairly.

A fresh surprise is provided by NCO Ibrahim Ahmad Musa Khawaldeh at the Dona Labas checkpoint. An Arabic-Serb dictionary in his knee pocket, the 21-year-old soldier finds time to study the language "in order to be able to understand and help the people."

In the town Srb, belonging to the Krajina enclave, two little girls hug their dolls on a bench in the city square. Our soldiers are camped there and a huge tree shadows with its ancient foliage the tables and chairs so hospitably taken out for us to rest for a while. The tree is said to have been the place under which Napoleon and Tito once rested. History is relived, but not for long.

Dusita, 6, and Nina, 7, sensibly watch the uniformed people come and go. From the way they grasp the apples I give them, fast but dignified and not forgetting to say thank you, I understand that sanctions are biting into Serb territory.

The U.N. presence in former Yugoslavia is greater in size and more complex than just blue berets. The Jordanians, having 3,000 troops there, form the second largest contingent after the



The toll of war: a blown up house in the Medak pocket (photo by Ica Wahbeh)

French, who number 5,000. There are around 30 nationalities working as peacekeepers, international monitors and civilian police.

In Lovinac, I have the chance to talk to Ayman Badawi, from Civpol (civilian police). The 25-year-old had already six years experience with Badia police when he was chosen to go to Croatia. In Lovinac, where he has been for almost one year, he is responsible for coordination between local police and UNPROFOR, for ensuring humanitarian help in cooperation with UNPROFOR and local people, for investigating crimes and reporting them to the headquarters, for coordinating meetings between Jorbat and local police, the UNCHR and for communication — for people who cannot communicate with their families — patrolling with Jorbat and local police the separation zone and acting as liaison officer between the local police and Jorbat and Canbat (the Canadian battalion).

"At the beginning I had trouble adapting myself. The local language was difficult and unusual. Nobody spoke English, so I learnt their language. Now I live with the local people and I understand them. I do not need any interpreter to go with me."

Capt. Mozamel Karaki, 28, had served for nine years with the Jordanian army before going to Croatia where he works as an information officer. His duty includes reconnaissance, follow-up and making sure the U.N. resolutions are implemented, marking on maps, knowing the terrain.

"It was difficult to be abroad and see completely different things from what one would normally see, especially the destruction."

Now our peacekeepers seem to have perfectly adapted to the situation, which they are supposed to keep under control.

Deputy sector commander for Sector South, Col. Morton, from Canada, is having lunch at the Jordanian company headquarters as we are visiting.

"I have one big problem with the Jordanians," he says jokingly. "They never let me go without eating with them first."

Based at the headquarters in Knin, the capital of the Serb-held Krajina, Col. Morton moves daily around,

when it comes to former Yugoslavia: "Is the U.N. presence really making a difference?"

A brick wall built at the very entrance to the UNPROFOR headquarters in Zagreb, having on each brick the name of a person missing

different sides of the fence it is obvious that the U.N. presence is more than necessary.

Col. Lazo Babic, Serb commander of the territorial defence force in Okucani, Sector West, looks like a seasoned warrior, but he seems tired of fighting.

"This war means big losses for everybody. The U.N. is the only solution, they have a great role. The U.N.'s mission is to preserve peace. The solution lies only in (negotiating) through the U.N.," maintains Col. Babic.

As for the Jordanians, with whom he deals directly, he says: "They are professional, highly qualified, disciplined, cooperative, respectful of ranks. There were no complaints about your soldiers; not from the army, not from civilians."

Major General Ghazi Tayyeb, commander, Croatia Command, is as busy as a full daily agenda and his many responsibilities require him to be. Yet he finds time to involve himself in negotiations, with good results usually; and to talk to the press

about UNPROFOR.

"We are not here to fight, create problems or put pressure on one side or another. We are here to keep peace. We do not impose ourselves or our will on any party. We try to let them decide without pressure. Things do not always go smooth. Soldiers face difficulties and dangers. But we strive to succeed in our mission."

UNPROFOR's fourth Force Commander, Lieutenant-General Bertrand de Lapresle, of France, believes there is "a lot of improvement" regarding military action in Croatia. "Military we are achieving what is asked of us. The situation is calming down, but peace will come only from the parties who are doing the fighting."

Regarding the Kingdom's contribution, Gen. de Lapresle is "glad, happy, proud of the Jordanian contingent."

"We are not here to fight, create problems or put pressure on one side or another. We are here to keep peace" — Major General Ghazi Tayyeb, commander, Croatia Command

attends negotiations as mediator between the two sides and makes sure "there are no gaps and we have a complete domination of the zone."

"We get along very well with the Jordanians. They cooperate and are professional," says the colonel.

Making a difference
A question is often asked

in this genocidal war, seems to be a snub to the peacekeepers' efforts.

U.N. secretary general's special envoy to former Yugoslavia, Yasushi Akashi, admits the mission is not "one hundred per cent a success."

But from the way ceasefire is maintained in Croatia and from talking to people on

Kingdom to hold

(Continued from page 1)

The top Foreign Ministry official, who arrived here from Syria, said Damascus was ready for making real progress in its negotiations with Israel.

Expressing optimism that the peace process would move forward, the Russian envoy said that this would require big

efforts from all parties involved, including the U.S. and Russia, the co-sponsors of the peace talks.

But he said it was still too early to say when bilateral negotiations, which were frozen after the Hebron massacre in February, would be resumed.

Government to pursue

(Continued from page 1)

take in new companies which would issue the compulsory accident insurance policies.

"The cabinet did not agree to the 150 per cent increase without a supporting study especially that it would affect drivers of about 200,000 cars," Ms. Khalaf pointed out.

"We could not adopt the second option because traditionally insurance companies were making up for their losses from the compulsory accident insurance policies by expanding their profit margin on the comprehensive accident coverage policies and if we allow them to pull out from the losing one they would be making net profits by only issuing comprehensive policies," Ms. Khalaf detailed.

"The government was left with the option of proposing an amendment to the insurance companies law, which would open the market to new companies and would link the issuing of comprehensive accident insurance policies with issuing the compulsory insur-

ance policy," Ms. Khalaf concluded.

She said the ministry's studies have shown that the losses incurred by the insurance companies as a result of the compulsory insurance were 52 per cent, of which about 26 per cent were covered from the profits made of insuring temporarily admitted vehicles.

"The net losses incurred by the insurance companies is actually 26 per cent," which is a far cry from the originally proposed 15 per cent.

A compromise proposal, Ms. Khalaf said, has already been made to introduce a 25 per cent increase as soon as the amendments are approved and another 25 per cent within a predetermined period "to cover the long term developments."

But she said, this proposal was not finalised, pending other amendments that would upgrade the services provided by the insurance companies to make these services compatible with these services the considerable increase in fees.

PLO hands out portfolios

(Continued from page 1)

National Authority. PLO sources said he dispatched Abbas Zaki, a member of the Central Committee of Fateh, to Damascus Saturday for consultations with hard-line Palestinian groups based in Syria.

The sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Mr. Zaki would try to convince the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the second largest faction after Mr. Arafat's Fateh, to join the self-rule government, which Mr. Arafat will head.

The Marxist PFLP, headed by veteran guerrilla leader George Habash, has opposed the PLO-Israeli autonomy accord.

But its leadership reportedly was contemplating joining the authority to pursue its opposition to Mr. Arafat's policy from within the emerging political system in the Palestinian entity.

A delegation from Hamas was due in Tunis this weekend.

Although the group has openly rejected the self-rule accord and vowed to wreck it, it has held secret contacts with Mr. Arafat and demanded five national authority seats. Mr. Arafat offered only two, the sources said.

The administrative body will comprise 24 members plus Mr. Arafat under the May 4 accord signed with Israel. It will have legislative, executive and judicial powers in the autonomous areas of Gaza and Jericho.

Mr. Abed Rabbo said one of



PLO spokesman Yasser Abed Rabbo addresses the press Saturday from the organisation's headquarters in Tunis (AFP photo)

the main goals of the new Palestinian Authority will be to win back all the territory occupied by Israel since 1967, including East Jerusalem.

The authority's objectives are set out in its first political programme, still to be ratified by the Executive Committee.

Mr. Abed Rabbo said it reiterated the Palestinians' position on Jerusalem, which is considered "an integral part of the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967" when Israel also seized the Gaza Strip, and West Bank.

The spokesman said the document set out the authority's aims until elections in October for an autonomy council to run the autonomous areas of Gaza and Jericho for a five-year interim period as set out under the May 4 Israel-PLO autonomy accord.

The authority also made 14 appointments to its "cabinet" in talks which began Friday at the PLO headquarters in Tunis and are due to continue until Sunday, Mr. Abed Rabbo

said.

Mr. Abed Rabbo said there was still no definite date for Mr. Arafat's return to Gaza and Jericho but that it would happen "at the latest within two weeks."

In Gaza, meanwhile, the Palestinian self-rule authority pledged to arrest and try the killers of two Palestinians alleged to have collaborated with Israel, a senior security official said Saturday.

Hamas said it killed the two men on Friday.

Mohammad Dahlan, Palestinian preventive security chief, said those responsible for the killings would be "dealt with by the Palestinian authority through legal measures."

"We will arrest them and put them on trial," he said.

The deaths are the first reported killings of collaborators since the May 4 agreement between the PLO and Israel.

Palestinian police attended the funerals of the two men and launched an investigation into the deaths.

Sanaa puts out feelers

(Continued from page 1)

sisted, preventing the integration of the two armed forces, intelligence agencies and bureaucracies.

Mr. Saleh alleges that Mr. Beidh is on the run and plans to set up a state of "greater Hadramaut" with Saudi backing in the eastern provinces, which account for about half Yemen's daily oil output of 340,000 barrels.

In Cairo, Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa asked the U.N. Security Council to arrange a cease-fire and said five other Arab countries are working with Egypt on a proposed council resolution to end the fighting.

In Sanaa, the Yemeni government newspaper, May 22, said that a Scud missile attack on Sanaa last Monday killed 35 people and wounded 95.

It gave no source for its report on casualties from the attack, the second Scud to have caused casualties in the capital.

Officials had said the missile which hit a densely populated residential area killed 13 people and wounded more than 100.

Thousands turned out for the funeral of nine of the victims and officials said four others were buried by their families.

Meanwhile, the man appointed vice-president of South Yemen said in a newspaper interview Saturday that foreign pilots were fighting on the side of the northern troops.

"There are indications and confirmed information of the involvement of foreign parties in the conflict" Abdul Rahman Al Jafri told the London-based Al Sharq Al Awsat newspaper.

"There are a number of foreign pilots and military experts at Hodeida air base now," he said, without giving the nationality of the pilots.

Mr. Musa said "what is important now is a ceasefire, because this is in the Arab and Yemeni interest."

Mr. Saleh has rejected any international or Arab interference.

King Fahd of Saudi Arabia met Friday with three southern leaders, including Heidar Abu Baker Al Attas, Aden's premier designate.

The official Saudi Press Agency said King Fahd also received a telephone call from Mr. Saleh, but gave no details.

On the battlefield a tense lull punctuated only by sporadic shelling appeared to have taken hold on fronts around Aden.

The southerners appeared content to defend Aden against an army almost twice as large as their own. Officers said they had been ordered to defend their positions and not attack.

"With each day that passes they lose a little bit, and time is on our side," said southern Brigadier Saleh Tammah, speaking at a front line 43 kilometres north of Aden's outskirts.

After a night of heavy shelling on the Zingbar front northeast of Aden, the area was quiet on Saturday and southern soldiers appeared relaxed.

On the western front southern forces repelled a northern attack this week and the northern forces fell back towards the former north-south border area of Bab Al Mandeb, some 100 kilometres from Aden, southern officials said.

The southern air force, which has dominated the skies, is still flying out of Aden. Mr. Tammah said it was bombing northern supply lines.

"They have failed in their attacks on all fronts and have switched to defending the ground they have gained," he said.

Official southern sources said northern units were preparing to move on the oil-producing region of Hadramaut.

U.N.-Iraq talks

(Continued from page 1)

it is realistic to expect the sanctions against Iraq to be modified this year.

But other members of the Security Council, notably China, France and Russia, lured by promises of big contracts by Iraq, have argued that the sanctions should be eased.

Yemen war leads to economic turmoil

SANAA (R) — Three weeks into war between the Sanaa government and southern secessionists, Yemen is a country in economic turmoil, largely cut off from the outside world.

Fighting and fuel shortages have disrupted trade. Tens of thousands of people have abandoned their villages and their crops. The political crisis before the war had already put the brakes on government activity.

The postal service has collapsed, few people have access to overseas telephone lines and flights in and out of Sanaa airport are expensive and sporadic.

As the business community and service went back to work one day after a nine-day holiday for the Muslim feast of Eid al-Adha, the economic future of this minor oil-producing country did not look bright.

"It hasn't shown through yet but in the long term the costs of this war are going to be devastating, whoever wins or loses," a European ambassador said.

The Sanaa government had hoped for a quick victory over southern secessionists, headed by Ali Salem al-Beidi, leader of the party which ruled South Yemen until union with the north in 1990.

But a northern offensive to-

wards the southern capital Aden seems to have run out of steam. In some places the secessionists have pushed the northerners back to where they were a week ago.

The fighting has so far done little damage to the country's infrastructure but the damage to Yemen's reputation will take years to undo, even if the war ends tomorrow, diplomats say.

"Yemen had much in its favour. It was a haven of democracy in the Arab World, foreign donors were very sympathetic and oil revenues gave the government a chance to put its house in order," said a banker who asked not to be named.

Now many foreign companies in the oil industry, the main area of foreign investment, are looking for ways to back out.

"What with kidnappings, hijackings, corruption, bureaucracy and horrendous labour problems, it was never an easy environment to work in. For many of us, the war is the last straw," said an oil supply company executive.

The main incentive to stay is the fear of losing their investments, which in the oil industry can run into tens of millions of dollars worth of equipment, he added.

Yemeni Hunt and Canadian Occidental (Canox), which

operate the main fields in the north and the south, are keeping their fingers crossed that the armies will not hit their installations and that war will end soon.

Canox says it expects a full 40 per cent of its cash flow this year to come from Yemen and at last report said there had been no impact on its production of some 159,000 barrels a day from its Masila field.

But for development agencies, which have little to gain from operations in Yemen, insecurity is beginning to take its toll.

The Netherlands, which has had two development workers held hostage east of Sanaa for more than two months, is seriously considering calling off its aid programme, diplomats said.

Bankers said Yemenis were equally cautious about investing or doing business. Some have cancelled pre-war letters of credit because they cannot be sure that their goods will arrive safely or that they will find customers to buy them, they say.

Insurance companies have imposed high premiums for ships at Hodeida on the Red Sea, the main port for trade with the north.

The effects are not yet evident in the form of shortages and the Yemeni rival has not

fallen sharply, partly because there is little demand for dollars from importers and travellers.

Official economic statistics are hopelessly out of date but foreign economists said that at the start of the war the central bank had foreign reserves equivalent to about two months of imports, below the level usually thought safe.

Planning Minister Abdul Karim Al Iryani, asked if the government was buying weapons, said: "We don't have any money."

The country has a foreign debt of more than \$7 billion, about equal to annual gross domestic product (GDP) — the value of what a country produces. For the 13 million Yemenis, per capita GDP is about \$600.

Economists say the government has been repaying only debts to creditors who are prepared to provide new soft loans. The war, widely seen as a rash pre-emptive strike by President Ali Abdullah Saleh, has reduced the chances of Western governments writing off some of the debts, they add.

President Saleh has staked his reputation on victory, saying that it was worth paying a high price for Yemeni unity, even to the cost of thousands of martyrs.

UAE bank credits surge despite low oil prices

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Credits extended by United Arab Emirates (UAE) banks surged by nearly 12 per cent in 1993 despite a sharp decline in oil prices, the central bank has said.

The credits and loans by the Gulf country's 47 local and foreign banks totalled 76 billion dirhams (\$20.7 billion) by January compared with 68 billion dirhams (\$18.5 billion) by January 1993, it said in a report.

The bulk of the loans went to the private sector, which has received 57.5 billion dirhams (\$15.6 billion), it said.

"The sharp rise in credits shows there is a business upturn in the region despite low oil prices," a UAE banker told AFP.

"Ironically, the low oil prices are triggering such an upturn. In the past, they used to cause a recession because governments had to cut spending but now the private sector is relying more on itself."

Extending credits has remained the main activity of UAE banks given the lack of other major investment opportunities. Most of the loans go to the industrial, trade and construction sectors.

The surge in credits, coupled with a steep fall in interests on deposits, allowed most UAE banks to make record profits in 1993.

Bankers have said that they expected a similar performance in 1994 as the private sector pressed ahead with its

own projects away from government partnership.

Balance sheets by 16 of the 19 national banks showed their combined net profits increased by nearly 14 per cent to 1.48 billion dirhams (\$403 million) in 1993 from 1.29 billion dirhams (\$351 million) in 1992.

The central bank report showed total bank assets also rose by around three per cent to 158.4 billion dirhams (\$43.16 billion) in January from 153.9 billion dirhams (\$41.93 billion) in January 1993.

Foreign assets, mostly in the West, declined to 65.6 billion dirhams (\$17.8 billion) from 68.5 billion dirhams (\$18.66 billion) and deposits on account of 61.1 billion dirhams (\$16.6 billion) from 64.4 billion dirhams (\$17.5 billion).

The report showed shareholders' equities, which include capital and reserves, increased slightly to 16.69 billion dirhams (\$4.54 billion) from 16.64 billion dirhams (\$4.53 billion).

This showed capital adequacy, the ratio between shareholders' equities and assets, stood at 10.5 per cent, far higher than the eight per cent floor set by the Bank for International Settlement for banks worldwide.

"The 1993 balance sheets of the UAE national banks showed that some of them have met BIS requirements while others exceeded it by two per cent to reach 10 per cent," the UAE Banks Association said.

Mazda loses \$428m; Mitsubishi income halved

TOKYO (AFP) — Mazda Motor Corp. announced a pre-tax loss of 44.1 billion yen (\$428 million) and its bigger rival Mitsubishi Motors Corp. said group earnings were more than halved to 21.3 billion yen.

Daihatsu Motor Corp. Ltd., a minicar affiliate with Toyota Motor Corp., meanwhile reversed its losses with a pre-tax profit of 2.4 billion yen, saying the return to the black reflected cost-cutting efforts.

Mazda, which forecast another two years of losses including 33 billion yen this year, also cut its year-end dividend, blaming the loss on a 19.3 per cent plunge in sales to 1,769 billion yen as well as the stronger yen. The troubled Hiroshima-based carmaker posted a profit of 6.2 billion yen a year earlier.

President Yoshihiro Wada said the loss defied efforts to strengthen and streamline operations and signalled three consecutive years of losses, saying the company aimed to return to the black by the year ending March 1997.

"Considering the continuing severe operating environment, Mazda will accelerate its efforts to improve Mazda's financial strength in order to achieve profitability even during periods of slow market growth," he said.

Mazda, which is 24.5 per cent-owned by Ford Motor Co. of the United States, said overall sales were expected to recover to 1,840 billion yen this

year despite the projection for continued losses.

In the latest year, export revenue fell by 21.2 per cent to 1,068 billion yen while domestic revenue fell 16.1 per cent to 701 billion yen.

Overall sales of motor vehicles alone fell by 22.4 per cent from the figure a year earlier to 1,187 billion yen and sales of parts and components for overseas production were down 15.9 per cent at 156 billion yen.

Mazda sales volumes sagged 20 per cent to 1,008,992 units, depressed by a 23.2 per cent slump in exports to 614,038 units. Domestic sales were down 14.5 per cent at 394,954 units. Overall car sales fell by 17.5 per cent to 837,700 units and sales of commercial vehicles tumbled 30.6 per cent to 171,292 units.

Mitsubishi said its group pre-tax earnings plunged 57.7 per cent from a year earlier to 21.3 billion yen. Suffering from a slump in exports as a result of the stronger yen, it said worldwide sales fell 7.3 per cent to 2,947 billion yen with operating profit dropping 47.1 per cent to 40.8 billion yen.

The company, which gave no group forecast for the current year, projected lower parent company earnings of 13 billion following a 24.1 per cent decline to 35.4 billion yen in the latest year. But parent sales were forecast to increase to 2,520 billion yen after falling 6.1 per cent to 2,456 billion yen.

Turks sell off gold in financial crisis

ISTANBUL (R) — Many Turks are responding to economic crisis by selling the family jewels, feeding a flow of illegal gold exports, traders said Friday.

Some are active out of hardship caused by steep inflation. Others want to cash in on high interest rates.

But either way it has become a buyer's market, with gold prices falling well below world levels and giving big profits to merchants who trade on the difference.

And while gold sales to neighbouring countries like Iran and Syria often bypass an official monopoly on exports, denying the central bank its commission, they still bring in dollars and help the bank to support the lira.

"The system works very well. Gold is going out, dollars are coming in," said a dealer in Istanbul's ancient covered Bazaar who asked not to be named.

Italian cabinet passes package to boost economy

ROME (R) — The new cabinet of Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi passed a series of decrees Friday to boost employment and pull Italy out of its worst economic recession since World War II.

The media tycoon's free-market government get aside some 500 billion lire (\$312 million) to boost youth employment over the next three years and help business in the building sector which has been ravaged by two years of corruption scandals.

Mr. Berlusconi, sworn in two weeks ago at the head of a government that includes neo-fascists and federalists, aims to create one million jobs in the next two years, reform taxes and press ahead with privatising state companies.

Over 150,000 construction jobs have been lost in the past two years — a result of recession and the graft scandal that

destroyed the old political guard and paved the way for Mr. Berlusconi's election in March.

Since the scandal broke, local authorities have preferred to postpone building work rather than draw the attention of anti-corruption magistrates.

The magistrates are probing bribes that businessmen paid to politicians in order to win contracts.

Public Works Minister Roberto Radice said the new measures would help speed payments for building work that has already been completed by freeing cash reserves for public works projects and cutting through bureaucratic red tape.

"Unblocking the law on building contracts was desperately needed by businessmen and will help boost the country's productive base," said Mr. Radice after the meeting.

In a first attempt at living up to a pledge to reduce the bureaucracy that economists say stifles Italian business, the cabinet also passed new rules making it easier for small companies to take on employees.

At present, every company has to obtain official permission before it hires new workers, a process that can take several weeks.

Under the new rules, small firms will be able to hire at will.

Government officials said the reforms did not mean a return to old-style Italy when a primary way of winning business was by means of an envelope stuffed with cash.

Stringent anti-corruption measures to ensure that tenders for public contracts remain transparent and rules aimed at keeping the mafia out will remain in force.

Russia forecasts 25 per cent drop in production this year

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Russian industrial output could fall by a quarter this year, the steepest drop in the last five years and much more than last year's 16 per cent dive, according to a government forecast published Friday.

The Centre for Economic Analysis said lower output was due to "low domestic demand which resulted from tough monetary policies at the end of 1993 ... high production costs and strong competition from imported goods."

According to figures released earlier this month, industrial output was 25 per cent below year-ago levels in the first four months of the year.

But many economists and government officials doubt the figures, saying that they take little account of a rapidly growing private sector and a rising black economy.

The official forecast said the decline in machine-building was expected to be the sharpest at 44 per cent, compared with a 13 per cent fall last year.

Light industry output would fall 39 per cent after a 28 per cent drop in 1993 and timber industry production was likely to slump 34 per cent against 25 per cent a year ago.

The forecast said the decline would be lowest in non-ferrous metals due to higher exports, with production down an average of nine per cent against 12 in 1993.

Fuel and energy output could shrink by 10 per cent, compared with 12 per cent last year.

Russian platinum output has fallen by one third over the last two years due to a drop in production of nickel, the head of the State Precious Metals Committee, Yevgeny Bychkov, told a news conference Friday.

Most of the country's platinum is produced as a by-product by nickel producer Norilsk Nickel.

"Platinum output has fallen by one third over the last two years," Mr. Bychkov said, while adding that the actual figure remained a secret.

Russia is a key platinum producer but figures for output, exports and reserves are closely guarded secrets.

Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin has admitted that unprofitable factories including defence enterprises must close to help redress the economy and said production would continue to fall this year.

He asserted however that Russia remained competitive in a number of industrial sectors and attacked the West for "discrimination" in barring market access for Russian products.

"The hardest thing is to shut down those (factories) which should not be shut down, which the country needs for the production of modern technology for necessary production," Mr. Chernomyrdin said in an interview with the official daily Rossiyskaya Gazeta.

"But there are those which not only should be closed but must be closed."

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY MAY 29, 1994

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: A good day to relax with the family and to attempt to resolve any complex problem that is facing you at present. See what you can do to improve conditions on the home front and retire early.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Plan how to improve your skills in career matters and you can gain more security in the future. Strive for happiness in whatever your endeavour.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Try a change of pace where personal matters are concerned and you can spark up your life. Put your best foot forward and you will succeed.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You have fine ideas for adding to present assets, so put them in operation without delay. Devote this evening to your loved one.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) This is a fine day for getting together with congenials and having a good time. Show that you have poise to handle any situation.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) A good day to study philosophical matters which can improve the quality of your life. Plan for the future and you will have great abundance.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Gaining a new perspective at whatever your main interests are can bring more in-

teresting results to you at this time.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Study new methods that could bring you greater income in the future. Showing more thought for your loved ones is wise for you now.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) A good day to come to a better accord with family members. Make plans to improve your status in career activities which you are involved in.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Forget outside activities today and concentrate on personal work that has to be done. Take it easy tonight with your loved ones.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Take time for meditation in the morning and adopt the right philosophy to follow. Show true devotion to loved ones in your family.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) A good day for entertaining at home but only invite congenials for complete harmony. Much happiness can be yours now if you desire.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) A good day to make plans which could give you more abundance in the days ahead. Show your gratitude to family members for their love and support.

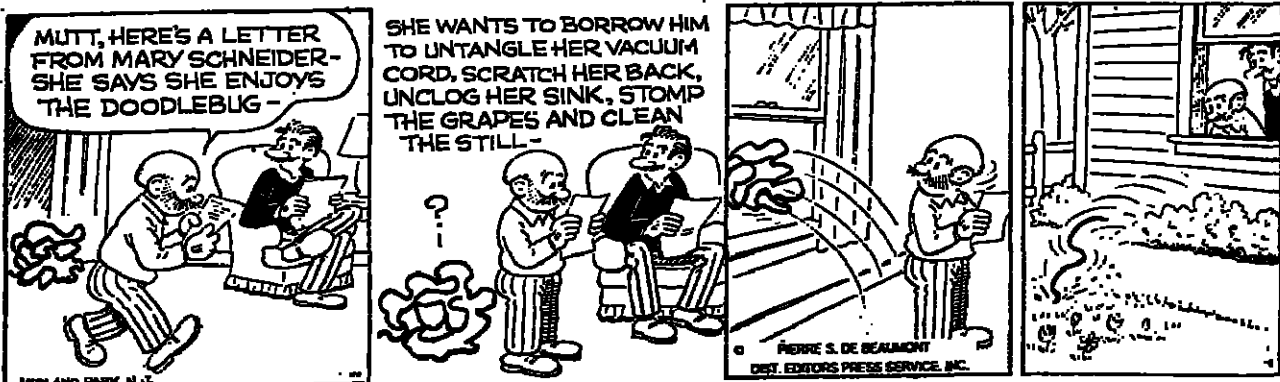
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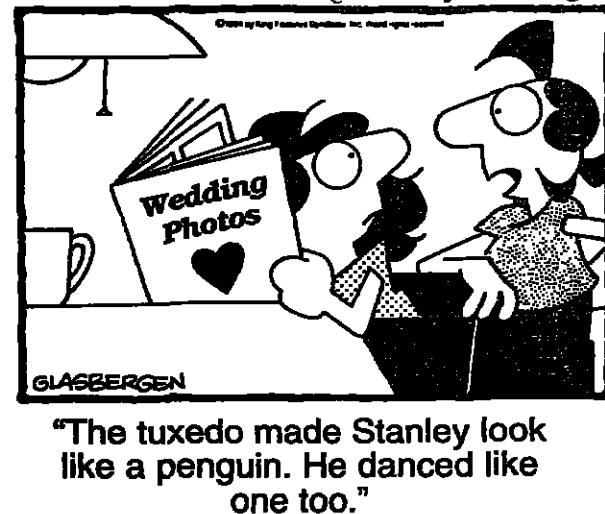
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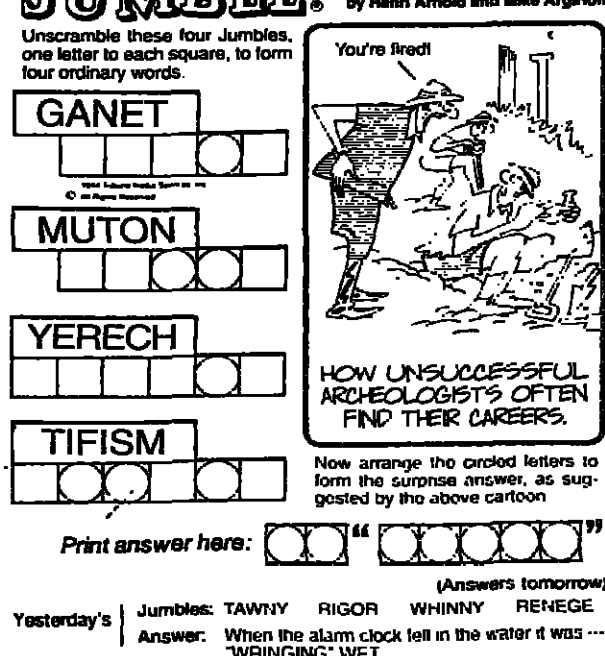
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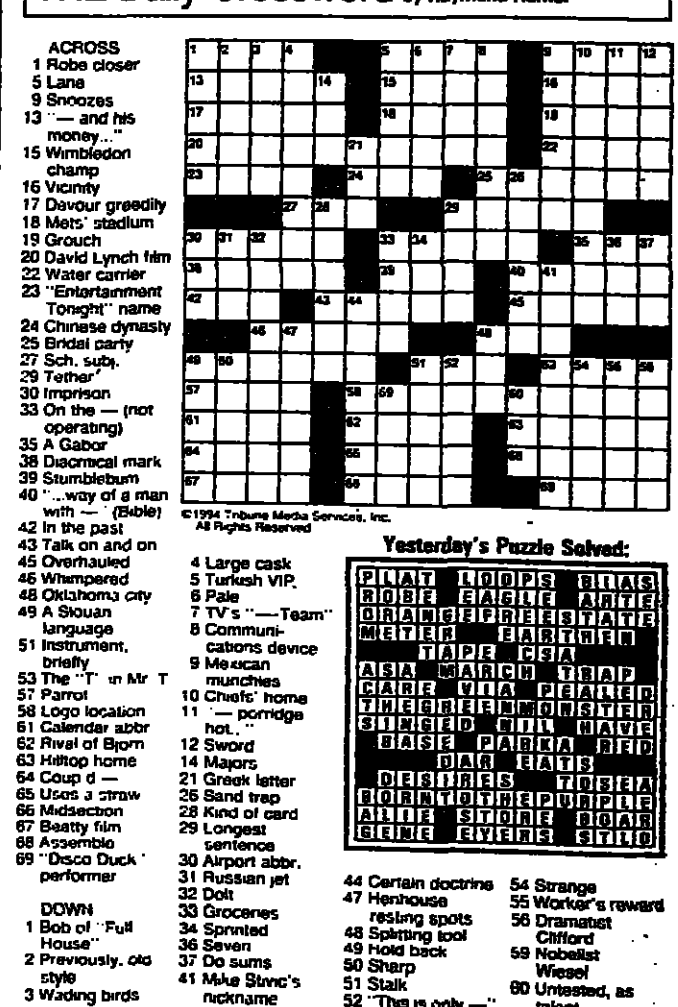
THE BETTER HALF



JUMBLE



THE Daily Crossword



مكتبة ابن بطوطة

N. Korea rejects IAEA proposals

VIENNA (R) — North Korea rejected all proposals by the U.N. nuclear safeguards agency for taking samples from a reactor to verify whether it had been used as a source for nuclear arms fuel, the agency said Saturday.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), admitting failure in its talks, said the North Koreans had held fast on their "unique status" — a formula by which they can pick and choose which international safeguards measures to respect.

North Korea "rejected all IAEA proposals... to select, segregate and secure fuel rods for later measurements so as to be able to verify the history of the reactor core, specifically to verify whether this is the first core," the IAEA said.

North Korea "continued to maintain that in view of its 'unique status' it could not accept the IAEA verification measures proposed," the statement added.

The agency said its inspectors rejected a counter-proposal by the North Koreans because it would not have allowed them to verify the history of the reactor core.

The five-megawatt reactor at Yongbyon, where defuelling and refuelling of radioactive rods is now in progress, went into service in 1986. But it was shut down for 100 days in 1989, giving North Korea a theoretical opportunity to take out plutonium-laden rods for bomb-making. Pyongyang denies this.

U.N. nuclear inspectors left North Korea Saturday after a five-day visit in which they

failed to persuade the Communist government to let them monitor refuelling of the nuclear reactor, Pyongyang's official news agency reported.

"The negotiating delegation of the International Atomic Energy Agency headed by Demetrius Perros, director of the Division of Operation of the Safeguards Department of the agency... left here today by plane," said the Korea Central News Agency, monitored in Tokyo.

The South Korean government said Saturday North Korea was heading for a confrontation with the West by preventing U.N. inspectors from properly analysing spent fuel from its nuclear reactor.

"North Korea is close to crossing the line and the situation may demand a confrontation with Pyongyang," a Foreign Ministry official told the domestic Yonhap News Agency.

Talks in Pyongyang between U.N. nuclear inspectors and North Korea produced no agreement, heightening suspicions of a clandestine weapons programme, ministry officials said.

Reviving the prospect of international sanctions against the Stalinist state, the United Nations Security Council was considering meeting later Saturday to warn North Korea that it must let the U.N. inspectors carry out tests.

Hans Blix, director-general of the (IAEA), told U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali in a report Friday that his inspectors had not yet been able to take proper samples from the Yongbyon reactor.

He said only a few days remained to get the needed samples but that North Korea had resisted shutting down the reactor or complying with IAEA proposals to guard the removed fuel rods.

The North's refusal to cooperate with the IAEA sets the isolated state on a fresh collision course with the West over its suspected development of nuclear arms, according to political analysts here.

Foreign Minister Han Sung-Joo, who returned Wednesday from an overseas trip, was quoted by Yonhap as saying his ministry would decide soon "whether diplomatic efforts continue or end."

Spent fuel rods being removed from the reactor could hold vital evidence as to whether the Communist government has diverted plutonium to develop a nuclear bomb.

"The ministry is discussing steps to cope with the new situation which is very discouraging," a ministry official said.

North Korea said Saturday that it would not suspend the refuelling of a nuclear reactor to let the U.S. inspectors test spent fuel.

"They (inspectors) are demanding the selected separation of fuel rods and sampling... we can never allow this under the present condition, no matter what others say and what counter-action they may take," said the official North Korean daily Rodong Simmun.

The development created a flurry among Security Council members in New York. The council is considering a

Saturday meeting to warn North Korea it had "reached the barrier" one envoy said. A statement or a resolution that China may even support would demand North Korea cooperate with the IAEA immediately.

A statement or a resolution might not threaten economic sanctions but would imply that the Council was taking up the issue shortly again.

Mr. Blix, whose team was returning to Vienna Saturday, said he was leaving two inspectors behind to report "further on the situation." He said fuel was being discharged at a "very fast pace" which was not dictated by safety considerations.

N. Korea to test-fire missile

Meanwhile, North Korea is preparing to test-fire a missile, Japanese dailies reported Saturday.

Quoting an unnamed Japanese Foreign Ministry official, the Tokyo Shimbun said Japan had received information from the United States that North Korea was preparing for a test launch.

The official believes the missile would be an improved version of the Rodong-1 missile, based on the Soviet Scud design used by Iraq in the 1991 Gulf war, the daily said.

The Yomiuri Shimbun newspaper quoted an unnamed military source in Tokyo as saying a U.S. spy satellite spotted a week ago crane trucks for test-firing on a North Korean missile base and monitoring vessels at a port facing the sea of Japan.

Yeltsin welcomes Solzhenitsyn back to Russia

VLADIVOSTOK, Russia (Agencies) — President Boris Yeltsin Saturday welcomed Alexander Solzhenitsyn on his return to Russia after 20 years' exile and said the author could play a significant role in reshaping the country.

"You are returning home in difficult, controversial times," Mr. Yeltsin said in a telegram read out at Mr. Solzhenitsyn's first news conference on Russian soil.

"I am convinced that your talent and your experience as a historian and thinker will help us all in reorganising Russia." But the writer said he was not going to seek an official position in post-Communist Russia.

"I will not occupy any political post neither by appointment nor by election," he told journalists. "I want to help our homeland... by public activity, through meetings, by persuasion and through my articles."

The 75-year-old Nobel Literature Prize winner looked fit and vigorous at the news conference after two busy days since he set foot in Russia.

From Vladivostok he plans to travel by train to Moscow. The plane bringing Solzhenitsyn from Alaska made a short refuelling stop in the Pacific port of Magadan, once an unofficial capital of a huge network of labour camps set up by Soviet dictator Josef Stalin.

The writer spent years in the camps and later wrote of his experience in his book Gulag Archipelago. Its publication in the West led to his arrest and expulsion by Soviet authorities in 1974.

Mr. Solzhenitsyn went shopping Saturday morning for the first time since returning from exile and was astonished by the prices.

He was astounded to discover that sausages cost 10,000 rubles a kilo on Vladivostok's central market.

"When I left the prices were quite different. It's strange for me, I'm not used to it," he told a stallholder. Sausages cost barely one or two rubles a kilo in 1974, the year that the dissident author was expelled.



Russian writer Alexander Solzhenitsyn and his wife Natasha tour the central market in Vladivostok (AFP photo)

Mr. Solzhenitsyn, who flew into this Far Eastern Russian port on Friday, was making his first contacts with the new Russia which has emerged since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

In the market he was surprised not only by inflation, but by displays of Western produce like chocolates which had never been available in the old days. He also came up against beggars, a social reality which had been hidden under the Communist regime.

"I've never seen so many people. It's usually quiet here," one of the "bomjis" (homeless) grumbled as he was almost trodden underfoot by the foreign journalists flocking after Mr. Solzhenitsyn.

Several onlookers, particularly elderly women, greeted the 75-year-old writer and thanked him for his struggle against communism. "You are right, you are right," one of them called out to him. "Look over there, there is a great man going by," one man said as he pointed out the writer to his 10-year-old daughter.

"He's a second Dostoevsky, a true patriot, a true Russian," Vladimir Agriev, a 58-year-old

engineer, told AFP. Mr. Solzhenitsyn, surrounded by security men and a swarm of journalists, exchanged only a few words with the market traders, to ask them about their prices.

As well as shopping, the former dissident visited a regional hospital to enquire about its needs in equipment and medicine.

During his visit, he found himself stuck in a lift for more than 20 minutes. He took it very calmly — lift breakdowns are extremely common here — and used the time to question the hospital's director about working conditions, jotting down her replies in a little notebook. He explained that he did not want to talk to the patients out of respect for their privacy.

The director meanwhile explained how deregulation of the Russian economy had forced the hospital to import honey from neighbouring China even though Vladivostok produced its own.

The writer refused to make any statements as he left the hospital, saying "how can I comment? I need to make lots of visits over several months."

Tonton Macoutes return officially to lend support to Haitian army

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (R) — The feared Tonton Macoute militia which helped Haiti's Duvalier dictatorship brutally rule the country for almost three decades announced Friday it was putting its forces at the disposal of the army to help fight any foreign invasion.

"The VNS is offering its services to the country in case of military intervention," spokeswoman Gerard Dessaint said, using the group's official title, the Volunteers for National Security.

It was the first official statement from the militia since it was formally disbanded after the fall of Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier in 1986.

The Tonton Macoutes were formed in the late 1950s as the private militia of dictator Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier and helped kill, torture and silence thousands of Haitians opposed to the family's 29-year reign.

Although some of the estimated 300,000 members were killed in the attacks that followed Mr. Duvalier's downfall, the Macoutes rose from the ashes last autumn when faced with the scheduled return of the country's exiled

President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Several neo-Duvalierist organisations have flourished since autumn, with the help of the army leaders who overthrew Mr. Aristide in September 1991.

One of the biggest, the Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti (FRAPH), has been blamed by international human rights monitors for massive rights abuses, especially against pro-democracy activists and Mr. Aristide supporters.

President Bill Clinton recently raised the possibility of using military force to remove Haiti's military rulers, although there is lukewarm support among the U.S. public for that.

At a news conference staged at the party headquarters of a neo-Duvalierist political group and attended by more than 100 self-described Tonton Macoutes, Ms. Dessaint said the more than 30,000 members in Port-Au-Prince were ready to help the army fight invading forces.

"We have rifles, rocks, machetes, conch shells and

magic powder," Ms. Dessaint said.

She also promised the Macoutes would soon begin wearing their trademark blue denim uniforms.

Many Haitians did not know Ms. Dessaint and said she was not a top former leader.

Ironically, the Macoutes and the army were often at odds during the Duvalier's reign but formed a common alliance against Mr. Aristide.

Meanwhile, Vice President Al Gore Friday said the United States was pleased with the Dominican Republic's vow to honour a U.N. embargo on Haiti but cautioned that it will take time to fully implement the trade ban.

Mr. Gore, following a telephone conversation with President Joaquín Balaguer of the Dominican Republic, told reporters, "we're very pleased with the response that President Balaguer has given," on the embargo.

Mr. Gore cautioned that the new sanctions imposed by the United Nations "can not occur with 100 per cent effectiveness overnight. It takes some time to put all of the elements in place."

Sihanouk reports no progress at talks

TOKYO (R) — Talks between the Cambodian government and Khmer Rouge guerrilla leaders have made little progress towards ending the country's civil war, Cambodia's King Norodom Sihanouk said Saturday.

"Cambodia which formally restored independence, territorial integrity, national unity and peace following the signing of the Paris Peace Accord on Oct. 23, 1991, has striven to substantially restore national unity and peace up until now, but no success worth mentioning has been made," he said.

He was speaking at a banquet hosted by North Korean President Kim Il Sung in Pyongyang, where the talks began Friday.

His speech was reported by North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), monitored in Tokyo.

"Unfortunately, the civil war is going on between the royal government of Cambodia and the Democratic Cambodia side, imposing ineffable suffer-

ings upon the innocent peaceable population of Cambodia," King Sihanouk said.

King Sihanouk chaired Friday's opening session with Cambodia's first and second prime ministers, Norodom Ranariddh and Hun Sen, parliament chief Chea Sim and Khmer Rouge leader Khieu Samphan, KCNA said. The talks are scheduled to last until Tuesday.

The Khmer Rouge has proposed a ceasefire plan for discussion and suggested a list of 10 countries to act as ceasefire monitors, but a diplomat in Phnom Penh said: "You couldn't pick a list of countries less likely to participate in a ceasefire."

The Khmer Rouge is held responsible for the deaths of one million Cambodians during its 1970s reign of terror which was ended by a Vietnamese army invasion in December, 1978.

The Royals, another non-Communist faction and the

Khmer Rouge joined forces against the Vietnamese and a pro-Hanoi government led by Hun Sen.

The 1991 peace accord signed by all factions led to the deployment of a 22,000-strong U.N. peacekeeping force charged with running the country until elections a year ago.

The Khmer Rouge boycotted the vote, threatening to disrupt it with violence, and have since waged a low-level guerrilla war to back ill-defined demands for an advisory role in government.

Mr. Khieu Samphan has raised the possibility of group members joining the Cambodian government and armed forces in a speech during peace talks in Pyongyang.

In the speech, Mr. Khieu Samphan said Cambodia should set up a framework "to be used as the basis for the formation of the national government and the unified national army which include all the Cambodian national parties."

Police launch borrow-A-brolly service

TOKYO (R) — Commuters caught in a downpour in Tokyo's summer rainy season can now pop into a police box and borrow an umbrella, a city police spokesman said Saturday. Police boxes at Tokyo Railway Stations are to receive stocks of second-hand umbrellas previously piled up and gathering dust in the Central Railway Lost Property Office. About 400,000 umbrellas are forgotten each year at stations in the Japanese capital and only a few are ever reclaimed, the spokesman said. Having tried in vain to get rid of them by holding regular auctions, railway authorities have now agreed to donate some of the umbrellas as a public service. Each will carry a Tokyo police logo and a road-safety slogan. "The programme is partly aimed at reducing the number of traffic accidents on rainy days," the spokesman said. "This way, we hope to kill two birds with one stone."

Briton fakes own death to claim insurance

LONDON (R) — A British businessman has been jailed for four years after faking his own death at sea and sneaking back home to live off an insurance pay-out of £150,000 (\$225,000). British newspapers reported Saturday that Paul Early, 40, was caught because he returned to live with his wife. Insurance investigators found him hidden in a hole he had dug under the floorboards of his house in Bournemouth, southern England. Mr. Early's wife and father were involved in the scam, claiming that Mr. Early was missing at sea after sailing from Almeria in Spain in November 1992. In fact Mr. Early, whose business was in difficulties, never left Spain and flew home four weeks later. He was arrested in February 1994 and jailed for four years for fraud. His wife and father received 12-month sentences for conspiracy.

Date rape lawyer's sentence cut to 2 years

LONDON (R) — A lawyer who took a fellow solicitor to a highland ball and then attempted to rape her wearing only his glasses and the cuffs of his Scottish costume had his sentence reduced from three to two years. The Court of Appeal in London declared the sentence passed on Angus Diggle, 38, had been too harsh. But it refused to quash his conviction, saying the original trial judge had been correct to say his attitude to women was unacceptable. Mr. Diggle, who has been in jail since his trial ended last September in a blaze of publicity and controversy over Britain's rape laws, was alleged to have told police after his arrest: "I have spent £200 (\$300) on her. Why can't I do what I want with her?" The appeal judge rejected an argument by Mr. Diggle's lawyer that the accused should be forgiven his comment as he had been drunk and said the attack had caused Mr. Diggle's victim considerable distress. Mr. Diggle said at his trial that he "misread the signals" after his victim undressed in front of him and got into bed. She had allowed him to stay overnight at a friend's flat following the dance they had both attended. The appeal court judge said Mr. Diggle had shown no remorse or sorrow for what he had done. In mitigation he accepted that Diggle desisted from continuing his rape attempt immediately his victim had shown resistance.

Musical condom rings the changes

ROME (R) — An Italian physics student is ringing the changes with a condom that plays classical music if it splits during sex. "When a condom breaks you need to be warned urgently so that it can be changed in time. Mine will do it with a quick burst of Beethoven," amateur inventor Lino Missio, 26, said. "I've got a prototype and it works just fine." Mr. Missio, who studies in Genoa, said his musical condom, which he patented this week, was coated with a special compound whose ability to conduct electricity changed when the condom splits. A minute, flexible microchip at the base of the condom measures any changes in the condom's electrical properties and sounds the alarm. "It doesn't just play music. You could get it to give you a verbal warning," Mr. Missio told Reuters. He said he was looking for a company to help him develop and market his invention.

U.N. protests Bosnian army deployment

SARAJEVO (R) — U.N. peacekeepers protested Saturday after finding Bosnian government troops deployed illegally in the military exclusion zone around Sarajevo and rival forces skirmished in artillery duels.

Rob Annink, spokesman for the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), said 100 soldiers of the Muslim-led Bosnian army were found in the zone on Mount Igman Friday.

A strong protest against the violation was being lodged with the Muslim command, he added.

Artillery exchanges involving Serb, Muslim and Croat forces were reported in northern Bosnia.

Bosnian Serbs blamed the Croat HVO militia for a shelling incident at Brcko on the Bosnian border with Croatia in which a civilian was killed and three people were seriously wounded on Saturday morning.

Fighting between Muslim and Serb gunners was reported on the edges of the Muslim Tuzla enclave in the north.

Leaders of the warring factions accused each other of blocking progress in internationally mediated peace talks.

Momcilo Krajisnik, head of the Bosnian Serb delegation to peace negotiations in the French town of Talloires, said they had not brought the factions closer together.

The Bosnian Serb News Agency (SRNA) quoted him as saying that Western and Russian officials, who hosted the meeting Wednesday and Thursday, would have "a difficult task finding a concrete solution."

Prime Minister Haris Sila-

jdžic of Bosnia's Muslim-led government gave a similarly pessimistic assessment.

"We haven't achieved much," he told Sarajevo Radio. "Our delegation has performed responsibly, but the aggressor (Serb) side was not cooperative. They stuck by their same positions."

The Serbs earlier accused the Muslims of making "megalomaniac demands" for territory and Mr. Krajisnik, speaker of the self-styled Bosnian Serb parliament, told Bosnian Serb Television that "nothing qualitatively new was achieved."

He added: "The differences between the two sides are considerable and great efforts are needed for a final solution to be reached because the Muslim side is persistently making its stand more radical, insisting on the war option."

International mediators want a solution under which the Serbs would have 49 per cent of Bosnia's land area and the Muslims and Croats, now allied in a federation, would have 51 per cent. The Serbs now control 70 per cent of Bosnian territory.

Despite the pessimism of the Muslim and Serb leaders, French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe said a solution to the two-year-long conflict was within reach.

He said international mediators were seeking to impose a ceasefire, set Bosnia's borders, establish governing institutions and begin rebuilding the former Yugoslav republic.

"We are at a crucial stage," Mr. Juppe told Radio France Internationale (RFI). "I think the coming weeks between now and July will be decisive."

Sarajevo Radio said the

talks were expected to resume in France on June 6 and 7.

France, the biggest contributor of troops to UNPROFOR, has threatened to start withdrawing some of its forces from Bosnia if progress is not made.

French radio said Saturday that U.S. President Bill Clinton had urged the French government to keep its troops in place until all possible paths to peace had been exhausted.

Meanwhile, more than 300 Serbs were evacuated from Sarajevo by bus Saturday despite bitter protests from a small group of Muslims whose relatives are detained in Serb prisons.

"My cousin has been in a Serb jail in Kula for more than two years and he wasn't even a soldier," complained 22-year-old Amela Kurtovic, among the Muslim demonstrators.

"We don't want these (Serb) people to leave the city until our prisoners are released from Serb jails. They (the Serbs) have lived in Sarajevo for two years attending our schools and eating our food and now they want to make a propaganda against us by leaving and telling the world how bad conditions have been for them."

Saturday's evacuees and their relatives began assembling in front of Sarajevo's shell-blasted railway station shortly after dawn. By 8 a.m. hundreds were milling amidst piles of luggage — some exuberant, others crying for those leaving or left behind — a familiar, bittersweet scene in this war-weary city.

Bosnian police kept the Muslim demonstrators, numbering about 30 and mostly women, well away from those leaving.

Judge blames security forces in S. Africa murders

PORT ELIZABETH, South Africa (R) — A South African judge blamed members of the security forces Saturday for the 1985 murders of black anti-apartheid activist Matthew Goniwe and three colleagues.

"It has... been established prima facie that the murderers of Matthew Goniwe, Sparrow Mkhonto, Fort Calata and Sello Mhlambi were members of the security forces," Judge Neville Zietsman said at the end of the year-long inquest he conducted into the deaths.

But he said he could not bring in a finding against specific officers.

"A case of suspicion has been made out against certain members of the police force... and certain members of the South African Defence Force (SADF)... but suspicion does not constitute prima facie proof," Judge Zietsman said, naming five senior police and SADF officers.

Among those named was former military intelligence chief Brigadier Joffe Van Der Westhuizen, who authorized transmission of a military signal ordering the "permanent removal from society" of the activists.

The signal was sent three weeks before the murders. Van Der Westhuizen, now a general, retired on medical grounds at the end of March this year.

But, Judge Zietsman added, it could not be shown that those who carried out the murders knew of the existence of the signal.

"There is no evidence to prove that the person or persons who murdered Matthew Goniwe and the others knew of the signal or its content."

Judge Zietsman said the evidence did not provide a direct link between the murders and "the acts committed by the persons under suspicion."

"I am accordingly not able to bring in a positive prima facie finding against any particular person or persons," the judge said.

The inquest was the second to be held into the deaths of the activists, whose hacked and burned bodies were found scattered outside Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape province.

The first inquiry ended with an open verdict but investigations were reported after a copy of the death signal was leaked to newspapers in 1992.

Judge Zietsman said in March after all the evidence had been presented that he would postpone delivering his verdict until after South Africa's historic elections at the end of April.

Clinton: D-Day must never be needed again

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton said Saturday that Americans should honour the sacrifices made during the D-Day invasion 50 years ago by meeting the challenges of the post-cold war era.

"The world wars are over. The cold war has been won. Now, it is our job to secure the peace," Mr. Clinton said in his national weekly radio address, taped Friday for Saturday broadcast.

Mr. Clinton leaves Wednesday to begin an eight-day trip to Italy, France and Britain, his first visit to those European allies since he took office 16 months ago. The trip is wrapped around 50th anniversary ceremonies of the D-Day invasion of Normandy June 6, 1944.

His stewardship of foreign policy under fire at home and abroad, Mr. Clinton will have a broad stage to argue he has had strong success in foreign policy and that his leadership is sound.

His theme in recent D-Day speeches, including the radio address, is that America has a responsibility to lead in a world rife with dangers including ethnic and religious hatred, starvation, and the threat of the spread of nuclear weapons.

"In this new era we cannot dispatch our troops to solve every problem where our

values are offended by human misery, and we should not," he said.

"But we are prepared to defend ourselves and our fundamental interests when we are threatened. We'll do so on our own whenever necessary, and we'll act with others whenever that's possible and prudent," Mr. Clinton said.

Mr. Clinton's father, William Blythe, fought in the North Africa and Italian campaigns during World War II. Mr. Clinton avoided the Vietnam War draft and protested the war from Oxford University, where he will receive a doctorate degree of civil law on June 8, the last stop of his trip.

Mr. Clinton said Americans should remember that those who stormed the beaches in France and Italy 50 years ago had no guarantee of survival.

"They had no guarantees, but they went on against gunfire, under shelling, over land mines — against all they ploughed ahead. And they knew that unless they prevailed, our very way of life might be lost," he said.

He said it was the current generation's obligation to make sure D-Day will never be necessary again.

"Working together with American leadership we can do that," he said. "We can resist tyranny. We can combat

terrorism and contain chaos. We can work for peace, for progress on human rights."

The White House said Friday that French people who have memories of D-Day 50 years ago may share them with President Clinton via computer.

A White House statement said French citizens with access to Minitel computer terminals may take advantage of services offered by French television networks TF-1 and France 2.

Both Minitel services will be available in France on the Minitel network access Number 3615. TF-1's service is accessible by Minitel access code ETE44 (summer 44) and France 2 by code Juin44 (June 44).

"The messages will be read and translated by American volunteers in Paris and sent back to the White House via fax," the White House said.

This is an extension of the capabilities offered to U.S. citizens over the Internet and commercial on-line service providers in the United States.

More than 200,000 electronic mail messages have been received by Mr. Clinton and Vice President Al Gore since the service was opened in June 1993.

There are an estimated six million Minitels in France.

Jazz cut conference deficit to 2-1

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — The Utah Jazz won a game they desperately needed by finally playing like a team.

After failure in games 1 and 2 that were marked by unbalanced scoring and Hakeem Olajuwon's dominance, the Jazz reversed those trends Friday night and beat the Houston Rockets 95-86 to cut their deficit to 2-1 in the Western Conference final.

The Jazz, who never trailed, got strong contributions from almost every player. Karl Malone had 22 points and 16 rebounds, Jeff Humphries had 17 points, Jay Humphries 15, David Benoit 14, John Stockton 13 points and 11 assists and Tom Chambers added 10 points.

In the first two games, only three players — Malone, Hornacek and Stockton — scored more than 15 points in a game. Olajuwon missed his first eight shots of the game, misfired on seven of 16 free throws and was reluctant to pass the ball when faced with double coverage. He finished with 29 points and 13 rebounds, but it was easily his worst game of the series.

Utah opened a 12-point lead at halftime, upped it to 18 in the third quarter and did not let Houston get closer than eight in the final period.

Utah had a 53-39 edge in

rebouncing, made 4-of-7 3-pointers while Houston went 6-of-21 from beyond the stripe, and shot 42 per cent to Houston's 36.

The Jazz will look to even the best-of-7 series in game 4 on Sunday afternoon.

After going 4-for-15 from the field in the first three quarters, Malone hit his first three shots of the final period as Utah took an 84-67 lead. Humphries' 3-pointer with 5:45 left made it 89-74, and from there it was only a matter of keeping Houston from going on too big of a run. The Rockets missed 15 of their first 18 shots in the quarter, but had a 7-0 run after Humphries' basket to get the deficit down to 89-81.

Hornacek answered with a driving layup with 1:34 left, and when Vernon Maxwell and Robert Horry missed 3-pointers in the next 48 seconds, Houston's final charge was over.

The last time Utah was in the conference final was 1992 when the Jazz lost the first two games at Portland and then won game 3 at the Delta Centre.

From that team, only Malone, Stockton, Corbin and Benoit are still in uniform. Maxwell had 17 points and Sam Cassell 14, but no other Houston player reached double figures. Mario Elie was 0-for-7, Kenny Smith 1-for-5

and Cassell 2-for-9.

The Jazz got the lead as high as 73-55 midway through the third quarter after a 17-7 run in which Benoit scored the last six points. Houston scored seven of its next nine points from the free throw line, and Cassell's 3-pointer with 13 seconds left got the deficit down to nine.

Hornacek's two free throws with 0.9 seconds left sent Utah into the fourth quarter with a 78-67 lead.

Utah held a 52-40 lead at the half. The first two periods were noteworthy for the poor shooting by Olajuwon (4-for-15) and Malone (2-for-10) and for Houston's four technical fouls, none of which were prompted by any ranting or raving. The officials called one each on coach Rudy Tomjanovich, Olajuwon, Maxwell and Cassell after close calls and what seemed like normal back-talk from the Rockets.

Utah had a 9-0 run bridging the first and second periods and a 7-2 run midway through the second quarter. Olajuwon did not score his first basket until 7:27 remained, although he finished the half with 10 points and seven rebounds.

Jay Humphries had 12 points for Utah and Stockton had 11 in the half. Olajuwon missed all six of his shots in the first quarter,



Karl Malone of the Utah Jazz (left) and Otis Thorpe of the Houston Rockets battle for rebound Friday in first quarter of their NBA Western Conference Finals playoff game. (AP photo)

thanks mainly to the Jazz taking him beyond the 15-foot range or making him shoot

Sanchez Vicario reaches 4th round; Davenport upset

PARIS (AP) — Second-seeded Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario rolled into the fourth round of the French Open with a straight-set victory Saturday, but No. 9 Lindsay Davenport was ousted by Julie Halard of France.

Sanchez-Vicario, one of the few potential threats to overwhelming favorite Steffi Graf, downed Germany's Barbara Rittner 6-4, 6-2. The 1989 champion has yet to lose a set in her three matches.

Halard, who has risen to 24th in the world rankings after several strong performances this season, also triumphed 6-4, 6-2 over the 17-year-old Davenport, a rising star from California.

Davenport was the ninth of the 16 women's seeds to lose. Nine men's seeds also have been ousted before the start of the fourth round.

In a showdown of two of the brightest new stars on the men's tour, Alberto Berasategui of Spain overpowered Russian Yevgeny Kafelnikov, 6-3, 6-2, 6-2 in just 92 minutes.

Berasategui, a 20-year-old ranked 23rd, had ousted 14th seeded Cedric Pioline of France in the second round and was in total command against Kafelnikov, also 20, who has soared to 20th in the rankings after winning two tournaments this year.

"I hope I can keep playing like this," Berasategui said. In another third-round match between unseeded players, Italy's Andrea Gaudenzi advanced when Arnaud Boetsch of France withdrew in the second set because of a stomach injury. Gaudenzi won the first set, 6-1.

Four other women's seeds

advanced along with Sanchez-Vicario. No. 3 Conchita Martinez beat Brenda Schultz of the Netherlands, 7-5, 6-3; no. 7 Natalia Zvereva of Belarus

beat Elena Yemela of Russia, 6-1, 6-0.

Sanchez-Vicario had not

lost a set since the semifinals of the Australian Open in January. She had won 11 of her last 12 matches, including a fourth-round upset of No. 1 Petr Sampras.

Sanchez-Vicario had a lot of confidence in her ability to win the French Open. "I hope I can make it this time like I did in the last one," she said. "I can beat anyone."

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NEWS IN BRIEF

No-hoper hits winning streak

TOKYO (R) — Punters at a Japanese racetrack were astonished when a six-year-old mare, long tagged as a no-hoper, suddenly hit a stunning winning streak. After failing to notch a single victory in 1992, Chikushaen suddenly hit scintillating form, winning four of her eight outings last year at Arai racecourse in Kumamoto, southern Japan. Now it appears there was a simple explanation — it was not the same horse. Officials at a racecourse near Kobe, further north, told their Arai counterparts they believed Chikushaen had been switched by mistake with another light brown mare, Victory Gleam, after they spent the off-season at the same farm. An official at the farm ministry, the body which oversees Japan's racing industry, said he could not confirm the reports. "The horse's record after it came back from the farm was fantastic," one Arai city councilman told the daily Nihon Sports. "People were saying its performance far outstripped its pedigree."

Everton manager dispute settled

LONDON (AP) — English Premiership clubs Everton and Norwich City reached a settlement Saturday over manager Mike Walker's move to Middlesbrough. Everton have dropped their appeal against the £25,000 penalty imposed on them by the Football Association for poaching Walker from Carrow Road. The two clubs issued a joint statement saying they were bringing the long-running saga to a close. Walker is now expected to drop his civil case for constructive dismissal against the Canaries, although the Goodison boss is refusing to make any comment on developments. The joint statement read: "Everton FC and Norwich City have expressed a wish to restore the harmonious relationship they enjoyed prior to this issue and feel that the conclusion of the proceedings is in the best interests of both clubs and football generally." Everton, who narrowly escaped relegation to the first division earlier this month, were fined £75,000 and ordered to pay Norwich £50,000 compensation.

School, computer company sign agreement

In May 1994, an agreement was signed between R.A.M.S. and Ideal Systems/Amman, concerning the following:

- Supplying the school with two additional labs, exclusively equipped with Apple computers and a wide range of the most up-to-date educational software.
- Establishing a multi-media centre for learning the process of developing computer animations, computers-based movie production and the integration between audio-visual aids.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAYMIR HIRSHCH
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WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

- Q.1—East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠A1098 ♣K4 ♦KJ98 ♠108
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♣ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
2 ♣ Pass 2 ♠ Pass
What do you bid now?
- Q.2—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠54 ♣10852 ♦AJ73 ♠854
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♣ Pass 2 ♣ Pass
What do you bid now?
- Q.3—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠AJ ♣987 ♦10872 ♠Q75
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♣ Pass 2 ♣ Pass
What do you bid now?
- Q.4—East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠AKQ54 ♣AQ8 ♦6 ♠975
Your right-hand opponent opens the bidding with one diamond. What action do you take?
- Q.5—East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠Q875 ♣AKJ64 ♦K108 ♠6
Your right-hand opponent opens one club. What action do you take?
- Q.6—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠Q876 ♣AKQ63 ♦7 ♠K94
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 ♣ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
What do you bid now?

Look for answers on Monday.

Schumacher takes pole position in Spanish GP

BARCELONA (R) — World Championship leader Michael Schumacher claimed the second pole position of his career Saturday after Italian Andrea Montermini escaped serious injury following a spectacular high-speed crash.

The German, who is seeking to equal Briton Nigel Mansell's record of five successive season-opening races, dominated the session in his Benetton. It was his second consecutive pole after gaining the first of his career in Monaco two weeks ago.

Montermini was set to make his Grand Prix debut for Simtek as replacement for Austrian Roland Ratzenberger, killed during final qualifying for the San Marino Grand Prix four weeks ago.

But in the final minutes of the morning free session, Montermini crashed at 250 kph. His car disintegrated on impact and he was left appearing to be badly-injured in the survival cell. The front wheels and front section of the car were smashed away in the accident.

But after he had been taken by helicopter to the local Hospital General de Catalunya, circuit spokesman Martin Whitaker said he was conscious and apparently not seriously hurt.

He said Montermini was undergoing X-rays and scans. Schumacher's fastest lap of one minute 21.908 seconds left him six-tenths of a second clear of his nearest rival, Briton Damon Hill, who improved his time by more than 2.2 seconds to join the German on the front row of the grid in his Williams.

Finland's Mika Hakkinen was third fastest in his McLaren and compatriot J. Lehto was fourth quickest in the second Benetton.

The qualifying session was relatively uneventful after the weeks of shocks and accidents which have hit the sport.

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Rumours of World Cup disruptions dismissed

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — Orlando's police chief and the chief executive of World Cup USA have dismissed newspaper reports that English hooligans will team up with Dutch thugs to disrupt tournament soccer matches this summer. Police Chief Tom Hurlburg and World Cup boss Alan Rothenberg said the reports were unsubstantiated.

"I first heard that rumour four weeks ago," Hurlburg said Friday.

Rothenberg, on an inspection tour of the nine American host cities, said during a news conference that the stories were erroneous.

Hurlburg said officials at England's National Criminal Intelligence Service denied the report appearing in the Guardian last weekend.

The official cited by the paper said he was misquoted, Hurlburg added. The story was repeated by the Tampa Tribune Friday, along with speculation about possible violence.

The Guardian story said English hooligans were likely to link up with Dutch extremist groups at the Netherlands-Belgium match June 25 in Orlando and at a potential quarterfinal July 16 between the Netherlands and Germany at East Rutherford, N.J.

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Fittipaldi prepares for defence in Indianapolis

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Emerson Fittipaldi not only knows what it takes to win a race, he also knows the best way to start one.

The beginning of the Indianapolis 500 presents the most stressful and dangerous moments to the drivers trying to get into the rhythm of a long event.

Sunday, as usual, it will be 33 race cars, buffeted by extreme turbulence, accelerating to more than 220 mph (350 kilometres an hour) on the main straightaway and trying to squeeze through the narrow first and second turns in a matter of seconds.

A year ago, the turns on the 2.5-mile (4-km) oval were narrowed by eliminating the apron at the bottom of the banked track and replacing it with grass and a narrow concrete rumblestrip that sounds a loud warning when a car ventures onto it.

"I think one of the most difficult things I experienced last year is going to happen again this year," Fittipaldi said. "When you hit traffic with the new configuration you'll be in the turbulence of the guy ahead of you and you're going to lose the downforce."

"You're going to lose the front end of the car, and that's going to be a fight that will have to be fought the whole race. Not just myself, but all the drivers. And I think the toughest part of the race, trying to follow someone close enough that you can come out of the corner and have a run on them and pass before the next

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	FOR LOVE OR MONEY Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 Tom & Jerry At 11:00	Waleed Tawfiq in 1. Goodbye, Single Life Arabic The star of the movie will attend the shows. Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 2. ALADDIN Shows: 2:00, 5:00	CONCORD "1" THE GETAWAY Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 CONCORD "2" LANBADA Shows: 12:30, 3:45, 6, 8:15, 10:15	The political comedy play FORBIDDEN Every night at 8:30 p.m.	Today & Everyday Abu Awwad in social comedy "PUNCTURED BAG"	The political comedy play: "WHAT A TRAGEDY" (Al-Salam Theatre) At 8:00 p.m. For reservations call 655155

Rwandan rebels close in on government base

NAIROBI (AFP) — Rwandan rebels were Saturday closing in on Gitarama, the base of Rwanda's self-proclaimed government, as mortar shells landed near a hospital run by the Red Cross in Kigali, a U.N. spokesman said.

Intermittent artillery duels, between the mainly Tutsi Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) and government forces, raged in central Kigali after a truce earlier in the day, spokesman Abdul Kabia said by telephone from Kigali.

The rebel fighters were advancing southwards from the capital towards the interim government's base.

Government officials fled to Gitarama, 40 kilometres south of Kigali, after the RPF turned its offensive towards the capital a month ago.

Heavy fighting was also reported around the northern town of Ruhengeri, Mr. Kabia added.

Several mortar rounds landed near the International Committee of the Red Cross hospital in central Kigali, but there were no casualties or damage. It was not clear which side fired the shells, Mr. Kabia said.

U.N. troops evacuated another 695 civilians from the

rebel-besieged capital to safer areas on the outskirts, Mr. Kabia said.

The evacuees included 332 Tutsi holed up at Hotel Mille Collines for several weeks and 363 Hutus who had taken refuge at the Amahoro Stadium.

About 245 displaced people remained in the hotel and 5,500 at the stadium, Mr. Kabia added. Some 480 people were moved from Kigali Friday.

Government troops and Hutu militias have abandoned several positions as RPF fighters tightened their grip on the capital.

Rwanda plunged back into tribal bloodletting after Hutu President Juvenal Habyarimana was killed in an alleged rocket attack on his plane on April 6.

An estimated 200,000 to half a million people have been killed. Some 500,000 others have fled the country.

Many of the victims came from the Tutsi minority or were moderate members of the majority Hutu tribe, massacred by extremist Hutu militias.

The RPF launched an offensive against government troops and Hutu militia in an attempt to stop the massacres and grab power from the Hutu-dominated government.

Meanwhile, Kenyan officials said the heads of state of Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zaire will meet in the Kenyan capital on June 6, to discuss the Rwandan crisis.

The meeting is being convened by Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi.

Mr. Arap Moi told a gathering in the central district of Muranga Friday that neighbouring countries should not "sit back" and watch mass killings in the central African state without taking action.

The U.N. food agency said Saturday that some 1.6 million Rwandans displaced since the country plunged into civil war seven weeks ago were in desperate need of food aid.

The World Food Programme (WFP) was, jointly with the Red Cross, feeding 240,000 displaced people in accessible areas of Kigali, northeastern and southern Rwanda, but that was just a fraction of those in need, a WFP statement released here said.

"There is growing acute need of relief assistance for the affected population, particularly in Kigali and southern Rwanda where cases of malnutrition are reported to be on the increase," WFP Director Catherine Bertini was quoted as saying.



A Rwandan woman who was beaten so badly and left near death on a hill in Kabaya, 65km south of Kigali, is being treated by International Red Cross nurses after she had her left leg amputated below the knee (AFP photo)

Rebel Chechen leader escapes assassination

MOSCOW (R) — The interior minister of Russia's breakaway region of Chechnya and his police chief were killed in a car blast in which the territory's president narrowly escaped assassination, Interfax News Agency said Saturday.

It quoted a senior official of the north Caucasian republic as saying a car, packed with explosives, blew up when a motorcade passed by late Friday carrying Chechen President Dzhokhar Dudayev and some of his top ministers.

The blast hurled Mr. Dudayev's car 10 metres off course, but the president was not hurt, Chechen Press Minister Movladi Udugov said.

However, Interior Minister Magomed Eldiyev, Criminal Police Chief Said-Ali Batayev and their driver were killed.

Interfax said the interior minister and his police chief were going to Grozny, the capital of the north Caucasian region, to give a news conference about a hijack drama that ended earlier this week.

In the joint operation with Russian police forces, hijackers were foiled in a bid to flee by helicopter with hostages, explosives and millions of dollars in ransom.

Russia's Interior Ministry

said the four hijackers Friday landed their helicopter in Chechnya. But their escape into nearby woods was blocked by a waiting Chechen commando.

It was the first time Chechnya, which proclaimed independence from Moscow in 1991, cooperated with Russian forces.

Officials in Chechnya could not be immediately reached for confirmation of the car blast.

Interfax, which had earlier reported that the blast was caused by a land mine, said the incident occurred some 20 kilometres west of Grozny.

It said Mr. Dudayev held an emergency meeting of his government, after which he imposed a month-long curfew in the region and announced a day of mourning to be observed Sunday.

Mr. Udugov was quoted as saying that initial investigations showed that an explosive device used in the assassination attempt was similar to those used by Russian Secret Services.

Russia has recently taken steps to normalise relations with Chechnya. A senior aide of President Boris Yeltsin has said that the Russian leader might meet Mr. Dudayev soon.

Woman wakes up on way to morgue

PORT ELIZABETH, South Africa (AFP) — A South African woman woke up as hospital staff were getting her body ready for the morgue three hours after declaring her dead.

The South African press association (SAPA) reported Friday, Maria Botha, 66, who was in a coma when she arrived at the hospital, was fitted with a pacemaker. She was deemed to have died in the intensive care unit when "her pupils no longer reacted, she was cold and blue and the machine monitoring her heartbeats showed a steady line," her daughter Alma Nel said. A priest recited a funeral prayer and Mrs. Botha's family left the Greenacres Hospital in Port Elizabeth to make burial arrangements. Three hours later, hospital staff told Ms. Nel her mother was alive after all. "When I went back, she gave a weak smile and said she was feeling dizzy," Ms. Nel said.

Prince Charles strolls through Brandenburg Gate

BERLIN (R) — Prince Charles, heir to the British throne, strolled cheerfully through Brandenburg Gate with Berlin's mayor and called the reunification of the city divided by the cold war an enormous yet exciting task. The Prince of Wales was left momentarily speechless after a German onlooker asked him to pass on his regards to Princess Diana, his estranged wife. "I asked him to give my regards to Princess Diana and he just swallowed hard and acted as if he hadn't heard me," said Charlotte Marten, a 64-year-old pensioner from West Berlin. "It would have been nice to see Princess Di here as well," she added. Prince Charles, in the German capital to attend the final parade for British troops, moved on quickly to other well-wishers before walking to the nearby site for the new British embassy on Wilhelmstrasse. Prince Charles told a reception at City Hall that many in Britain were filled with sadness about the departure of British forces from Berlin. The last of the 3,000 British troops who protected Berlin during the cold war are to leave by September. "It will mark the end of a particular chapter in which Britain and Berlin's extraordinary history have been intertwined," he said in the address before the final military parade near the Olympic Stadium. Speaking first in German before stumbling on the word "geschichte" (history), Prince Charles interrupted his address to explain that he had had only two years of German in school and unfortunately had failed the final examination. He politely asked to continue in English. "In common with a large number of people in my country, I am proud that... we have played our part with the allies in helping preserve the freedom of your remarkable city," he added in English.

3 men jailed in cross-channel beer racket

LONDON (R) — A British court jailed three men who ran a cross-channel drinks racket buying up cheap French beer and wine and reselling it illegally in Britain. The smuggling gang made at least 42 trips on the Dover-Calais ferry in three months bringing back van loads of cheap drink to sell in south Wales and evading payment of duty. Prosecuting lawyer Roger Thomas estimated that £70,000 (\$105,700) of unpaid duty was involved in the January to April 1993 period when the 11-man gang operated the illegal ring. Judge Michael Burr jailed the three ringleaders for terms of between three and nine months, and said the gang has used "an army of helpers" in an organised conspiracy to flout the law and to try and make easy money. Undercover teams of customs officers tracked the gang's vehicles from the channel port to south Wales, and the 11 men were charged with the conspiracy to evade paying duty. Senior customs investigator Mark Hampton said afterwards: "This was the largest case of duty evasion at the time, but there are other prosecutions pending elsewhere." Britain relaxed its rules on importing drink at the start of 1993 allowing large personal allowances and even unlimited amounts if the drink was used for private parties.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Yemen kidnappers free Dutch engineers

SANAA (R) — Two Dutch development engineers, kidnapped by Yemeni tribesmen in March, have been released by their captors, tribal and diplomatic sources said Saturday. The diplomatic sources said Gerard Jeurissen and Jac Van Der Gun had arrived in the capital Sanaa after being handed over to intermediaries. A third Dutchman, Wilbert Elkerhorst, captured with the other two on March 25 was freed several weeks ago. The three, who were working on a project to develop water resources for Sanaa, were seized by the Jahm tribe which is demanding rent from oil firms using tribal land. Tribes in northern Yemen often kidnap foreigners to force demands on the government and foreign companies but the Dutchmen have been held longer than other hostages in recent times. The tribal sources said Mr. Jeurissen and Mr. Van Der Gun had been handed over in the Khawlan area east of Sanaa to Sheikh Mohammad Naji Al Ghader, who had been mediating for their release. They were believed held in a hideout 150 kilometres east of the city.

Rival factions resume fighting in Kabul

KABUL (AFP) — A clash intensified into a two-hour duel with heavy weaponry in west Kabul Saturday between rival Shi'ite Hezb-i-Wahdat and Sunni Ittihad-i-Islami, causing several casualties, hospital and party sources said. Wahdat, an Iranian-backed Shi'ite faction, and Ittihad, a Saudi-backed Sunni Muslim party allied with Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani, have frequently fought since the 1992 takeover of Kabul by Mujahideen. The latest bout started two days ago with an exchange of light fire between the rival fighters, intensifying Saturday into a two-hour exchange of heavy weaponry, Wahdat soldiers said. At least seven wounded men have been admitted for treatment, the staff at the Karte Se Hospital in the Wahdat-held area said. The Shi'ite faction is loosely linked to an alliance forged by Afghan Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and Uzbek warlord General Abdul Rashid Dostum to unseat Mr. Rabbani. Since January, when the Hekmatyar-Dostum front launched a bid to oust the president from power, more than 2,500 people have been killed and over 17,000 injured in the Kabul battles. The Wahdat-Ittihad fighting coincides with an ongoing tussle within the Shi'ite party between two groups over the selection of a new leader and central committee for the organisation.

Nigeria holds final conference poll

LAGOS (R) — Nigeria's military government pressed ahead Saturday with elections for delegates to a planned constitutional conference despite a low voter turnout in the first stage of the poll. Winners of last Monday's ward-level elections were voting to choose 273 delegates to represent their districts at next month's conference. The government says the conference will decide what kind of political system Nigerians want for their country, which has been under military rule for most of its independent life. "It's a simple process and we are doing all right," said one electoral officer in Nigeria's main city Lagos. The conference is the main political programme of military ruler General Sani Abacha, who seized power in November to end anarchy unleashed when a previous military leader annulled Nigeria's presidential poll.

Pope rejects 'politically correct' catechism

VATICAN CITY (R) — Pope John Paul, who is set to reaffirm a Catholic ban on women priests, was presented with the English version of the church's new catechism, which women's groups have slammed as sexist. The new universal catechism, or book of religious education, is the Roman Catholic Church's first since the turn of the century and the most extensive since that issued in 1566 following the Council of Trent. The English text was delayed by nearly two years by a debate over whether it should be stripped of words such as "man" and "men" and "mankind" when these referred to both men and women. A translation by an American priest from the original French version, issued in 1992, avoided exclusive language — the use of the male pronoun and adjective to cover both sexes. Some American and British bishops felt such language was discriminatory but the Vatican did not agree and ordered the translation changed. The prologue in the original translation read: "God, our saviour desires everyone to be saved..." The Vatican rejected this version and reworked it to read: "God, our saviour desires all men to be saved..."

Bangladeshi MPs to visit Israel

DHAKA (AFP) — Two Bangladeshi members of parliament have left for first visit by MPs from this country to Israel, the Daily Star newspaper reported Saturday. Ziaur Rahman, of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party, and deputy opposition leader and Awami League lawmaker Abdus Samad Azad, left Dhaka late Friday for a 10-day visit. It will include a tour of Jericho, which last month became a Palestinian autonomous city. Mr. Rahman and Mr. Azad also plan to visit Tel Aviv and occupied Jerusalem, the newspaper said. A Bangladeshi Foreign Ministry source said Saturday the two had gone there on the invitation of the Palestine Liberation Organisation

(PLO), and Tel Aviv was just a stop-over. He said the two countries maintained unofficial contacts, especially in trading, but there were "no immediate" plans to restore diplomatic ties.

U.N. calls new conference on Bosnia

ZAGREB (AFP) — U.N. envoy Yasushi Akashi has invited the warring parties in Bosnia-Herzegovina to negotiate a comprehensive cessation of hostilities at a meeting in Geneva Thursday and Friday, the U.N. Protection Force announced Saturday. The co-chairmen of the peace conference in the former Yugoslavia, Lord Owen of the European Union and Thorvald Stoltenberg of the United Nations, as well as U.S. special envoy Charles Redman and his Russian counterpart Vitaly Churkin were also invited, a UNPROFOR statement said. Mr. Akashi will be accompanied at the Geneva meeting by UNPROFOR commander Lieutenant General Bertrand De Lapresle, and the UNPROFOR commander in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Lieutenant-General Sir Michael Rose, the statement added. The announcement comes after France hosted two-day talks between the so-called contact group on Bosnia-Herzegovina — the European Union, Russia and the United States — and Bosnian Croats, Muslims and Serbs Wednesday and Thursday in the Alpine hideaway of Talloires, not far from Geneva (see page 8).

33 executed for car theft in China

BEIJING (AFP) — The Guangdong authorities have executed 33 people as part of a major clampdown on car theft which has reached epidemic proportions in the southern Chinese province, according to a report seen here Saturday. The 33 were among 101 criminals given public trials across the province, the Yangcheng Evening News said in its Friday edition. The death sentences were handed down Friday by intermediate people's courts and the executions were carried out immediately. According to the newspaper, car theft accounted for one third of all major crimes in Guangdong last year, with the value of the cars stolen totalling more than one billion yuan (\$115 million). It was believed to be the largest number of executions carried out in one province in a single day this year.

Major draws fire for attack on beggars

LONDON (R) — Prime Minister John Major provoked debate Saturday over a centuries-old issue — should society tolerate beggars or punish them. Mr. Major told a British newspaper Friday that beggars were offensive and should be reported to police. "It is an offensive thing to beg," he told the Bristol Evening Post. "It is unnecessary. So I think people should be very vigorous with it." Opposition politicians and charities for the homeless leapt to attack Mr. Major's comments, which threatened to become an issue in next month's elections for the European Parliament. Labour Party campaign coordinator Jack Straw told a news conference that Mr. Major's Conservative government was responsible for an increase in the numbers of beggars in Britain's cities. "The number of beggars on the streets is a potent symbol of the social collapse that has occurred under John Major's government," he said. An acute housing shortage developed under Mr. Major's predecessor Margaret Thatcher after she introduced tighter social-security regulations and a policy to discharge mentally disturbed people from hospital into the community.

IRA under pressure to seek peace

OXFORD, England (AP) — The Irish prime minister says if the IRA rejects the chance of peace offered by a British-Irish proposal and continues to kill, its campaign will fail. Albert Reynolds, in a speech late Friday at Oxford University, said any attempt to maintain violence would discredit the "so-called peace strategy" built by the Irish Republican Army's (IRA) political ally Sinn Fein in recent months. "The demonstrable futility of continuing the armed struggles in defiance of the overwhelming will of the Irish people will as surely undermine any attempt by them to continue over a long period, just as the loss of belief in apartheid or in communism led to the sudden internal collapse of their systems," Mr. Reynolds said. "The twin-track strategy of the armalite (rifle) and the ballot box has come to the parting of the ways."

Top Kashmir militant captured

SRINAGAR (AFP) — Indian army troops captured a top Kashmiri Muslim militant leader Saturday in the state capital of Srinagar, army sources said. Maussam Ali, supreme commander of the Al Barq organisation, offered no resistance and gave himself up after his hideout in the Rajbagh district was surrounded by troops, the sources said. The Al Barq, or lightning, is one of the several Muslim militant groups campaigning for Kashmir's secession from Hindu-majority India and merger with its Muslim neighbour Pakistan. Meanwhile, army and paramilitary troops were continuing a sweep Saturday in woods surrounding the district of Doda where violence linked to Muslim militancy has left 15 people dead in the past week. Kashmir government officials said the operation launched Friday was ordered to flush out foreign mercenaries believed to be hiding in the area.

Iraq sees U.S. policy reversal after China decision

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq, encouraged by Washington's trade ruling on China, predicted the United States would also reverse its policy of linking human rights to lifting sanctions on Iraq.

The government newspaper Al Jumhuriyah said Saturday U.S. President Bill Clinton's decision Thursday to renew Beijing's most favoured nation (MFN) trade status despite concerns over human rights abuses was a victory for Iraq.

"America's new political demands — the so-called rights of Kurds and marsh Arabs (in Iraq) and recognition of opposition which Washington says Iraq has to accept before lifting of sanctions will eventually disappear," its editor-in-chief Salah Al Mukhtar wrote.

"It (America) admits that its trade interests are more important than human rights... America's logic is based on double standards and cheap lies," he said.

"Human rights for America are merely toilet paper used to remove the dirt of American colonialism," Mr. Mukhtar added.

He predicted that the U.S. administration would reverse its policy on Iraq and drop its insistence that Baghdad respect the human rights of Kurds in the north and Shi'ites in the south before U.N. trade sanctions were eased or lifted.

In the last review of Iraq sanctions, the U.S. was at odds with other members of the Security Council in demanding that, in addition to weapons monitoring, Baghdad comply with a host of other conditions. These included ending what was described as Baghdad's persecution of Kurds and Shi'ites.

Mr. Mukhtar said Mr. Clinton "butchered" any link between human right and trade. From now on "no one will dare, whether American or non-American, to repeat with confidence the condition of adhering to human rights before lifting the embargo."

"We say with full confidence that Clinton's latest decision is not victory for China alone... but it gives a new strong signal that the requirements of the logic to force sanctions on Iraq have collapsed."

Christopher details plans

Meanwhile, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher has pledged that the United States will keep up the pressure on Beijing over human rights, despite de-linking the issue from trade.

Mr. Christopher, addressing the Asia Society here late Friday, the day after Washington renewed the most favoured nation (MFN) status for China for another year, said that the United States would not let "the invisible hand of economics alone" when dealing with Beijing.

"Our advocacy will be strong and firm and determined, because we're not backing away in any respect from our human rights policy,"

Critics slam Berlusconi for Mussolini comments

ROME (R) — Political commentators slammed Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi Saturday for saying that wartime dictator Benito Mussolini "did some good things in Italy" for a while.

Mr. Berlusconi, who heads the first government since World War II to include neo-fascist ministers, said in an interview with the Washington Post that history was a fair judge of Italy's "duce."

"Later, of course, (Mussolini) would take away liberties and lead the country into war, so obviously the total outcome was condemnation," he said. "But for a while, Mussolini did some good things here, and that's something that history says is correct."

Mussolini, who ruled Italy with an iron fist for over two decades, was forced to flee Italy in 1943 and was shot two years later by resistance fighters who hung his body upside down in a Milan square for public display and insult.

Commentators and critics of Mr. Berlusconi, who was sworn in just two weeks ago, said the prime minister should take a closer look at his history books.

"What Berlusconi is saying is absolutely false," Leo Valiani, a life senator from the Republican Party and a well-known anti-fascist, told the Milan dai-

ly Corriere Della Sera.

"Mussolini began stifling Italians' liberty on Jan. 3, 1925, with his decrees that suspended freedom of the press and freedom to assemble... and the ugly fascist squads were already doing their part in the years before..." he said.

Luciano Lama, a top union leader, said: "Too many of the men who have recently taken power in Italy show they are completely ignorant about Italy's past — a dramatic story of suffering that is etched in the memory of entire generations."

"They talk about it with great flippancy, haphazardly and with confused ideas," he added in the left-leaning daily L'Unita.

In the Washington Post interview Friday, Mr. Berlusconi tried to quell international concern over the presence of neo-fascists in his cabinet.

"Fascists do not exist in my government. They do not exist. There is nobody in my government who is against liberty and democracy," he said.

His coalition includes the neo-fascist-led National Alliance. Three of its five ministers in the government are from the Italian Social Movement (MSI), Mussolini's political heirs.

London airport jammed as Britons flee rain

LONDON (R) — The world's busiest international airport, London's Heathrow, was battling to cope with an expected record numbers of passengers Saturday as holidaymakers fled wet spring weather, airport officials said.

Police were called in to control the crowds and at one point limited access to Terminal 1, which is used by British

Airways (BA) for its European and domestic flights.

An airline spokeswoman said the congestion was mainly caused by passengers flying out for a three-day weekend as Monday is a public holiday.

The crowding caused average delays to BA's European flights of around 50 minutes, but they grew to as long as two hours.

Japanese Socialists are ready for new coalition

TOKYO (AFP) — Japanese Socialist leaders Saturday emphasised their desire for a key role in creating a new coalition to replace Prime Minister Tsutomu Hata's minority government.

Tomichi Murayama, chairman of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), said at the party's central committee the SDP "must return to power and actively participate in moves to establish a new coalition framework."

The SDP, the second largest opposition party, walked out on the government last month following infighting, forcing Mr. Hata to head Japan's first minority administration in 39 years.

Mr. Murayama said his party would never return to the coalition in its current form. "We should not mix up our positive attitude toward a coalition and our reversion to the current cabinet."

Mr. Murayama warned that if Mr. Hata failed to step down to form a new coalition with the SDP, he would be forced to call general elections by the end of the current parliament session which ends June 29. "The Hata cabinet is reac-

tionary with continually negative attitudes," Mr. Murayama said. "There is no other way than his voluntary resignation or elections."

Mr. Murayama and SDP Secretary-General Wataru Kubo earlier indicated that the party may be willing to return to the ruling camp if Mr. Hata resigned voluntarily.

Mr. Hata has said he will not step down because of the pressing need to concentrate on issues such as a budget bill and solving trade disputes with the United States.

Mr. Murayama hinted he would be willing to join with elements of the largest opposition Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), saying, "we also need to look for cooperation with some LDP members who have ideas of protection of the constitution."

He added: "We need to take the political leadership, getting along with liberals and social democrats, aiming at a moderate multi-party system."

Mr. Kubo also said at the committee, "I'm determined to establish a new coalition government, cooperating with part of the current coalition and some of the liberals in the LDP."